THE OUTSIDE IMAGE:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXTERNAL ARCHITECTURAL DISPLAY ON MIDDLE BYZANTINE STRUCTURES ON THE BLACK SEA LITTORAL

by

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ABSTRACT.

This study is concerned with the manner in which Byzantium manifested itself through the exterior of its buildings. The focus is the Black Sea from the ninth century to the eleventh.

Three cities are examined. Each had imperial attention: Amastris for imperial defences; Mesembria, a border city and the meeting place for diplomats: Cherson, a strategic outpost and focal point of Byzantine proselytising.

There were two forms of external display; one, surface ornament and surface modelling, the other through the arrangement of masses and forms. A more nuanced division can be discerned linked with issues of purpose and audience.

The impulse to display the exterior can be traced to building practice at imperial level in the capital in the early ninth century. Surface ornament continued to be linked with the display of secular authority.

Display through structure was developed in Cherson and the north Black Sea region to project the presence of Orthodoxy and was closely associated with conversion activity. By the end of the tenth century, through that external presentation, the form of the church building had itself become symbolic.

External display can be seen as a vehicle for the expression of regional forms and evidence for the tenacity of local building “dialects”.

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ABBREVIATIONS

See Primary Sources

AASS	*Acta Sanctorum,* 71 vols (Paris, 1863-1940).
BGA	*Bibliotheca Graphorum Arabicorum*, ed. M.-J. De Goeje (Leiden 1870-).
BHG	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica graeca*, ed. F. Halkin (Brussels, 1957).
CFHB	*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Series Washingtoniensis, Washington, DC, 1967-; Series Beroliensis, Berlin/New York, 1967-; Series Vindobonensis, Vienna, 1975-; Series Italica, Rome, 1975- Series Bruxellensis, Brussels, 1975-.
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1828-97).
DOS.	*Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, eds McGeer, E., J. Nesbitt & N. Oikonomides (Washington, 2001).
NPTC	National Preserve of Tauric Chersonesos, Drevnyaya St., Sevastopol 99045, Crimea,Ukraine.
P B E I	Martindale, J (ed.). 2001. *The Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire I*: (641-867) (CD). London.
PG	*Patriologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeco-Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris,1857-1936).
PL	*Patrologia Cursus Completus, series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844-1974).
S B S	Oikonomides, N. (ed.) *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, Washington.
SOC.	*Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. T. Preger (Leipzig, 1901).
T I B	*Tabula Imperii Byzantini*.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The aim and purpose of the study.

The geographic focus of this study is the Black Sea littoral and the regions abutting it. The territorial focus is that of the Byzantine Empire and its cultural partners for the period from the end of the eighth century to around the first quarter of the eleventh century. The cultural product which will take the centre stage is architecture and, specifically, the manner by which the exteriors of the buildings of the period were articulated. I will argue that this articulation was a conscious form of display. Due to the limited survival of secular monumental architecture the structures to be examined will be, predominantly though not exclusively, churches.

As is evident from the title, this study is concerned with "image" in its broadest sense: the manner in which the Byzantine state, its faith and wider culture, was deliberately manifested. It will, consequently, also be concerned with identifying the audience(s) for the display.

Visible art, as Brubaker has put it, is a form of public document.[1] The visual delivers its message directly and indiscriminately. How a building is expressed externally, whether through its basic structural forms or its ornament, is clearly a "public document" reaching a very wide readership, domestic and foreign, elite and humble, literate and illiterate. It also reaches beyond those who partake in the activities within and, thus, is capable of being understood, contemporaneously, in a variety of ways

[1] Brubaker (2010), 33-4.

and on differing cultural levels. This study seeks to discern the messages the external display was transmitting and to consider the extent to which they may have been understood differently, in depth and complexity, between the likely audience groups. Although, as Cormack has asserted, the church as the dominant intellectual and moral institution, may have sought to limit artistic expression to Christian themes,[2] we shall see that external architectural display may have generated images of Byzantium wider than the Christological and beyond the expression of faith to which the internal figural display was largely limited.

The study has, additionally, a temporal focus: from the close of the eighth century to the first third of the eleventh. The first quarter of that period sees both the second and final period of active imperial and ecclesiastical suppression of holy images and the resolution of the struggle over images in favour of the iconophiles. After 843 pictorial images of the holy were not merely permitted but required. Without them the church would be incomplete, false and lacking in power.[3] That power emanated from the direct access to the supernatural facilitated by the images of the holy inhabiting the inner space of the church.

The victory of the iconophiles has been characterised as one of realism over symbolism, a struggle becoming apparent in the seventh-century Canon 82 of the Quinisext Council prohibiting Christ from being represented as a lamb.[4] Whilst the inner space of a church can be arranged through the positioning of icons to represent the hierarchy of holy space assisted by the absence of depth in the images, the exterior of the building is overtly part of the earthly realm; the physical, perceptible and the

[2] Cormack (1985), 10.
[3] Photios, *Homilies*. XVII, 2-6. Cormack (1985), 151-2.
[4] Taft (1992), 47-8.

knowable. Towards the end of this study I will examine whether, and the extent to which, considerations of symbolism nonetheless persisted and had a part to play in the development of external display.

Concern for exterior appearance in Byzantine churches (and in some secular architecture) is evident, in a variety of forms, in surviving structures of the middle Byzantine period and is manifest by the beginning of the tenth century.[5] The paucity of complete unaltered structures,[6] however, renders it difficult to ascertain a point of origin, still less a line of development, of that concern and the extent it differed from what featured on pre-ninth-century structures.

Ousterhout has argued that church architecture, after the eighth century, had to be judged by different values from that of the sixth century because of changes that had taken place in the intervening period in Byzantine society and the manner of worship.[7] The wide variety in outward expression of churches of the middle Byzantine period suggests that the building performed two roles. Every church had to contain a "canonical core" necessary for the celebration of the liturgy and the display of iconographic programmes. Thus even rock cut churches replicated the vaulting and spatial layouts of domes, columns, apses and wall spaces and even the patterns of coursed masonry.[8] Around that core are the details that give the structure

[5] Mango (1976), 96; Krautheimer (1986), 353; Ousterhout (1999), 195.
[6] Mango has estimated that less than ten percent of medieval Constantinople's buildings survive. Mango (1985), 9.
[7] Ousterhout (1999), 259.
[8] Ousterhout has neatly identified the Byzantine church (after the eighth century) as having, despite evident external differences, a "sanctity of form" so that in rock-cut churches of places as far apart as Cappadocia and the Crimean mountains elements, such as domes, conches and vaulting, ultimately acquired a metaphysical importance and were faithfully reproduced in circumstances where they were not needed for structural purposes. Ousterhout (1999), 24-5. For details of the rock cut churches of Mangoup, Eski-Kermen and elsewhere in Crimea see Aibabin *et al* (2003), 140, Table 54.
[8] Ousterhout (1999), 259.

individuality: the finishes, furnishings, choice of materials and, significantly for this study, elements of external display. Those details have the capacity to be both the avenue for the expression of innovation and creativity but also the bearer of meanings associated with them.[9] The choices made could reflect not only the aims and preferences of the patron but also cultural links with other regions and the persistence of local forms.

2. The sources.

There are two primary aims of this study: to identify the various forms of external display and then to locate them within their historical contexts the better to understand the milieu in which they arose and their purpose. The sources are teasingly reticent to reveal the external detail of buildings and the sources are primarily tapped for contextual information: events, the intentions of primary "players" and the relationships between groups, states and individuals. The following represent the major sources accessed for the purposes of the study.

2.1. Chronicles

The Chronicle of Theophanes was the principal source for the eighth century to 812/3.[10] It supplies a framework for the almost continual hostilities between

[9] What were the "canonical essentials" of the building? Self evidently there were churches which were not domed and there were wide variations on the dome structure itself in size and aspect. There was like variation in surface articulation and ornament as well as structural forms such as the number and arrangement of subsidiary chapels. Such variations emphasise the point that only a relatively small number of major elements of the building were necessary to create the canonical space and structure, and that they were internally focussed. Ousterhout (1995), 171. The essentials appear to be the naos, the narthex and the bema, the last comprising a tripartite sanctuary with fully communicating spaces.

[10] The edition used is that of de Boor (2 vols.), Leipzig 1883. It has been translated with scholarly commentary by Mango and Scott (1997). There is an additional English translation of Turtledove,

Byzantium and the Arabs, the extent to which the latter penetrated the empire's territories, most particularly, for this study, Anatolia, the damage caused and the steps taken by emperors to build and strengthen defenses. It also chronicles the growth of the Bulgar menace and its spread south of the Danube. For the eighth century the chronicle is particularly important in view of the paucity of other written Byzantine historical writing from that period. It makes specific mention of events involving Amastris, Mesembria and its neighbourhood and Cherson. Its weaknesses as a source are that it presents information solely from a Byzantine perspective and its overt partiality against the iconoclast emperors whose actions and motives are constantly denigrated. Nevertheless the significant investment in building, restoration and re-establishment of defensive works and whole cities by the iconoclast emperors is quite evident. It enables conclusions to be drawn regarding the defences at Amastris in particular.

The continuation of the Chronicle known as Theophanes Continuatus is a source for the period from 813 to 960.[11] Two sections are of particular interest, Book III which sets out the building programme of Theophilos (829-42) and Book V that of Basil I. Theophanes Continuatus has similar weaknesses to Theophanes with the added element that much of the compilation is highly partial towards the Macedonian

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(Turdledove, H. 1982. *The* Chronicle *of Theophanes; Anni mundi* 6095-6305 (A.D. 602-813). The translation of Mango and Scott has been preferred having significantly greater commentary and critical analysis.

[11] The text used is the edition of Bekker, Bonn, 1838 now freely available online in a digital format. Partial translations in English exist. For a translation of the section dealing with the buildings of Theophilos see Mango (1986), 160-165 and commentary there appended. For a translation of the *Vita Basilii* see ibid, 192-199. There is a further, as yet unpublished) translation of the *Vita Basilii* by I. Ševčenko of which I have been permited sight and acknowledge, with thanks, the access afforded to me. For the purposes of this study there was little discernable difference between then two. I also had regard to the *Synopsis Historiarum* of Skylitxes (ed. J. Thurn, Berlin 1973) which has recently been translated with commentary by J. Wortley as *John Skylitzes: A synopsis of Byzantine history,* 811-1057, (Cambridge, 2010). The descriptions of the building work of Theophilos (para 9) follow those of *Theophanes Continuatus* without supplying any additional information.

dynasty and dismissive of the achievements of Michael III. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the anti-iconoclast invective, the report of the buildings of Theophilos is the only occasion on which it is reported fresh ideas are introduced into the Byzantine canon and that they had much to do with external display: they could hardly be said to be in imitation of Arab palaces unless they could be manifestly seen as such. The report of Basil's programme, still fresh in the lifetime of Constantine VII, the author of Book V, is close to eyewitness status. The descriptions can be seen as suggestive of a heightened regard for external appearance.[12] Book III provides evidence of the continuing Arab threat into the 840s in Anatolia and suggests the possibility of penetration to the Black Sea region.

In the context of this study the Russian *Primary Chronicle*, composed in the second half of the eleventh century by a monk in the Caves Monastery, Kiev, provides important information on the relations between Byzantium and the Dnieper Rus' and the development of the latter from loose tribal groups to a polity with which Byzantium enters treaties.[13] It is the principal source for the number and content of those treaties. For historical events it is largely dependant on Byzantine sources for the period 842-948 and there are errors in the dates given.[14] For the second half of the tenth century the detail given suggests accuracy from then extant records. The source provides valuable insights on trading and raiding routes, conditions in the Black Sea, the polyglot, multi-ethnic make-up of Constantinople and Cherson and the importance of that city to both Rus' and imperial interests.

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[12] See further pp. 37-41.
[13] The edition is that of D. Lichachev and V. Adrianova as *Povest' Vremmenych Let, 2 vols*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950 with reliance upon the translation into English of S. Cross and O. Sherboeitz-Wetzor as *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, Cambridge, MA, 1953 with commentary. There has been recent critical appraisal of the Primary Chronicle in Franklin and Shepard (1996), Part I, pp 3-180.
[14] Cross and Sherboeitz-Wetzor (1953), 26.

The *History* of Leo the Deacon is relied on for events between 959 and 976.[15] It is seen as one of the best sources for warfare in that period and is based in part on eye-witness material.[16] Leo himself states he seeks to present the truth but the narrative concentrates on the actions of individuals rather than presenting a comprehensive chronology of events and there are surprising omissions such as the marriage of Theophano to Otto II and, generally, the relations between the Byzantium and the Ottonian empire. It is a useful source for the actions of John Tzimiskes in the Balkans, his defeat of the Rus' and the recovery of the eastern Bulgar lands to the empire. It also records the emperor's triumphalist return to the capital and makes mention of celebratory church building at the Chalke Gate.

2.2. Hagiography.

The ninth-century iconoclast Life of George of Amastris is a significant source in this study since it supplies information as to the conditions on the Anatolian Black Sea coast and in Amastris at the start of the ninth century prior to the formation of the theme of Paphlagonia, trading relationships with other cities, the continuance of the Arab threat and the impact of the Rus' raiders.[17] It also provides a *terminus ante quem*

[15] The edition of this source is that of C. Hase, Bonn, 1828 which was published together with a highly praised Latin translation. This source has recently been translated into Engish by A-M Talbot and D. Sullivan as *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, Washington, 2005 together with a detailed introduction and commentary with a comprehensive bibliography.
[16] Talbot and Sullivan (2005), 9.
[17] The edition is that of V. Vasil'evsky, *Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija*, 2, (St. Petersburg, 1893), 1-73 and reproduced in his Trudy, 3 (1915), 1-71. The Greek text is available on the Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database (http://128.103.33.15/TEXTS/10.html). A translationof the text by D. Jenkins, S. Alexopoulos, D. Bachrach, J. Crouser, S. Davis, D. Hayton and A. Sterk (University of Notre Dame 2001) is available against which my reading of the text has been checked. There has been no recent critical analysis of the Life. It has been analysed by Ševčenko (1977) and Markopoulos (1979) reaching differing views on the dating and authorship of ceratin passages (principally the Rus' raid). Opinions as

for the town's defensive walls. It also reveals the authority wielded locally by the church and elites in governance. The importance of an association with imperial power for enhancement of city status is noted. Its reliability as a source and particularly of the Rus' attack will be dealt with in the next chapter.[18]

The Pannonian Lives of Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius provide information on the imperially directed proselytising activities of the empire in the mid-ninth century on the north Black Sea area among the Khazars and the work of Methodius as archbishop on the Bulgarian frontier.[19] The central role of Cherson in the Christianising of the lands north of the Black Sea is also suggested as is the polyglot and multi-faith nature of the city with the presence there of settled groups of Rus' and Jews. The Life of Constantine is believed to have been written by Methodius and his own by a disciple. They are now argued to be reliable as historical sources.[20]

A Russian hagiographical collection, the *Paterik*, is of stories from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, compiled at the Caves Monastery, Kiev in the thirteenth century.[21] Although at some remove from the ninth and tenth centuries their value to the study is the light thrown on the interaction between Byzantium and Rus' after Christianisation of the latter and the adoption of Byzantine models to local conditions. The historical

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to the dating of those sections have been proffered by Zuckerman (2000), 101f, Treadgold (1989), and Franklin and Shepard (1996), 31.

[18] See pp. 57-65.

[19] *Vita Constantini* and *Vita Methodii*, ed. P. Lavrov, *Materialy po istorii vozniknovenija drevnejshev slavjanskoj pis'mennosti* (1930, repr. 1966); F. Grivec and F. Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses*, Fontes (Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta, 4) (1960); French trans. and commentary, F. Dvorník as *Les Légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Hattiesburg, 1969); English trans and commentary, M. Kantor and R. White as "The *Vita* of Constantine and the *Vita* of Methodius", *Michigan Slavic Materials 13* (Ann Arbor, 1976)

[20] M. Kantor and R. White (1976), vi.

[21] *Kyjevo-pečers'kyj pateryk*, ed. D. Abramovich (Kiev, 1930), English translation and detailed commentary by M. Heppell as *The* Paterik *of the Kievan Caves Monastery* (Cambridge, MA, 1989). Excerpts are also available in English translation in Zenkovsky (1974), particularly pp 135-140.

link between Athos and the Caves Monastery is revealed as is the close association, transmitted to Rus', between the emperor's secular and sacred roles. The collection also reveals the transmission of forms for the laying out of church foundations reflecting something akin to workshop practice rather than by measurement.

2.3. Manuals and treatises.

Great reliance is placed on the manual of diplomacy written by Constantine VII known as *De administrando imperio* (*DAI*),[22] compiled 948-52.[23] Its declared intention was the fitting out of his son with the necessary tools in Byzantine foreign policy and diplomacy. It contains information taken from earlier sources to which Constantine had access (such as Theophanes) as well as contemporary material. It was clearly intended to be an accurate guide to then contemporary concerns of the empire.[24] It reveals the strategic importance of the Black Sea and the pivotal position held by Cherson, the interdependancy of Black Sea cities and the annual trading route of the Dnieper Rus'. It also records the creation by Theophilos (829-42) of the theme of the Klimata (later Cherson) and the existence of the Paphlagonian theme fleet pointing to Amastris as a naval base not otherwise recorded. In terms of building it shows the empire constructing substantial defensive works for its allies, exporting basic forms and techniques. An omission was an historical account of the Bulgars. That may have been because the Bulgars had ceased to be a threat following the marriage alliance with Peter.[25] The Bulgars were, however, still occupying land the

[22] Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, De Administrando Imperio*, text and English translation by R J.H. Jenkins (Washington, 1967) with crtical introduction and detailed textual analysis.
[23] *DAI*, Introduction, 11.
[24] Jenkins noted that "the only hint of anxiety" in the text related to the peoples and movements to the north of the Black Sea; ibid, 13.
[25] As was suggested by Jenkins; ibid, 13.

empire wanted to recover and the marriage itself, as the *DAI* itself reveals, disgusted Constantine VII.[26] Furthermore there were nations not threatening to the empire that Constantine detailed in the *DAI*.

De Thematibus, a treatise on the theme structure of the mid-tenth century, also by Constantine VII provides useful evidence on provincial structure, particularly cities of importance and relative positions as well as historical data.[27] It was compiled, it is thought, somewhat earlier than the *DAI*, ca. 940.[28] The importance, by then, of Amastris in Paphlagonia, Ankhialos and Debeltos in Thrace and Cherson (by then named as such) in their respective regions is of note.

The *Book of the Prefect* compiled in the reign of Leo VI (886-912) details the regulation of trades in the capital and is evidence for the existence of guild systems and regulation through fines and tariffs.[29] It also reveals the polyglot, multi-ethnic make-up of the city and its trading groups. Bulgars, Jews and Arabs are specifically mentioned but not Rus' who do not, therefore, appear to have, at that stage, set up permanent trading patterns later evidenced in the *DAI* and the *Primary Chronicle*. There is a hint also of the nature of trading relations between regions of the empire requiring regulation. The absence of a mention of master masons in the category of trades seems surprising but building work itself had to be guaranteed with clear penalties (including re-building) for default.

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[26] *DAI*, 13/ 104-194.
[27] Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, De Thematibus,* text in A. Pertusi, *Constantino Porfirognito de Thematibus*, *Introduzione, Testo Critico, Commento*, (Rome, 1952).
[28] Ibid, Introduction, 12.
[29] Leontos tou Sofou*, to Eparchikon Biblion, Le Livre du Préfet*, with text, Latin and French translation by J. Nicole, (Geneva, 1893), reproduced in Variorum Reprints, (London, 1970). English translation by E. Freshfield as *Roman Law in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1938).

2.4. Correspondences and reports.

The letters passing between Symeon and the Patriarch Nikolas I Mystikos supply essential evidence of the relationship between Bulgaria and Byzantium in the first quarter of the tenth century and comprise, in the reportage of Symeon's responses, one of the very few occasions when Bulgar attitudes are revealed other than through a Byzantine prism.[30] The pretension on the part of Symeon to seek the Byzantine throne is highly relevant to the consideration of historical contexts for the buildings to be examined in this study. The letters also reveal the close involvement of the Constantinopoltan See in the conversion of the Alans and the Khazars and the involvement in that process of the authorities in Cherson and the Prince of Abasgia. The timescale for conversion is evidenced as was the need to involve all sectors of society.

Two letters from Khazaria (the Kievan Letter and the Cambridge Letter),[31] one dated to ca. 930 and the other to the first half of the tenth century, evidenced difficulties of travel in the Black Sea due to "brigands", the extent of Khazaria and that Kiev was a Khazar frontier settlement. The latter reveals the proselytising activity at the time of both Byzantium and the caliphate in the north Black Sea regions and hints at the intensity of the rivalry. Persecution of Jews within the empire and the seeming presence of a large community of them in Cherson is evidenced as is the interplay of alliances between the north Black Sea peoples with Byzantium, in particular that between Rus' and the empire against Khazaria.

[30] *Nicolai I, Constantinopolitani Patriarchae, Epistolae*, (*Corpus Fontium Hisoriae Byzantinae*, 6), the text edited with an English translation by R. Jenkins and L.Westerink as *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople*, *Letters* (Washington, 1973).
[31] Both letters are published with original text edited with English translations and with extensive commentary in Golb and Pritsak (1982).

The final major source, for the purposes of this study was the report, by Ibn Fadlan, an embassador from the 'Abbasid caliphate to the Black Bulgars in the early tenth century.[32] It is an eye-witness account. The Black Bulgars were neighbours to the north of the Khazars. The report evidences the multi-ethnicity of the Khazarian state and the proselytising activities of the caliphate in the lands north of the Black Sea. It also reveals the presence of Rus' traders on the Voplga and the extent of their trading with the caliphate. Of particular interest is the evidence here of the building of mosques to aid the conversion process, the conversion of the landscape.

3. Approaches to Byzantine architecture.

Unlike other aspects of art history where the focus is clearly upon the output of a specific school or area or even single artist, the study of buildings is, by its very nature, multifaceted. The building is a sum of its parts and each of those parts has a distinct genesis and developmental process potentially independent of the others.[33] Foundation shapes, superstructure design, external decoration, size, masonry technique and arrangement of special elements each deserve focus. The complexity is further increased through alterations taking place in some or all of the elements over time and the way those elements are understood. Additionally, as Mango observes,

[32] This source (Kitab ila malik al-Saqalibah) has been recently edited and presented with an English tranaslation and a modest level of quite basic commentary by R. Frye as *Ibn Fadlan's journey to Russia*, Princeton, 2005. An additional English translation of the section relating to the Rus' has been published by Montgomery (2000) together with detailed argument and commentary on the identity of the traiders referred to. He has doubts as to whether they can be properly identified as Rus'.

[33] This point has already been made in scholarship concerning the development of Byzantine architecture. See (e.g.) Lositsky (1990), 33-47, discussing the architecture of the Crimea from the 5th to the 15th centuries. The discussion there focused on spatial layout, masonry technique and metrological issues.

buildings are used, they have a practical function that cannot be ignored in any assessment of them.[34]

3.1 Identified approaches.

Mango has identified three principal approaches, the typological, the functional and the historical.[35] He later developed his thinking to add the symbolic/ ideological and to subsume the historical within a fresh category, the social and economic (taking into account geography).[36]

Typology, the associating together of buildings of seemingly similar style or design, is only helpful within narrow bands, be they chronological or geographical/regional.[37] A focus on "types", without qualification, tends to lead to identification of groups or "schools" of architecture and presumes a linear development over time.[38] The approach, by its very nature, ignores or overlooks individual differences between elements of a building. To do otherwise would so fragment the "types" identified that they would cease to have meaning or analytical use.[39] Nevertheless the typological

[34] Mango (1978), 7
[35] Ibid, 7-8.
[36] Mango (1991), 41-3.
[37] Or environmental/ geological. Ruggieri (1991). Ruggieri's thesis was, in part, that the development of the 4-vaulted structure was a response to seismic issues in earthquake prone western Asia Minor, ibid, 184.
[38] Mango (1991), 41. That Byzantine architecture did not follow, in a simplistic sense, such linear developments is now widely accepted. Ousterhout argues for a "period of transition" of experimentation for the sixth to the ninth century, giving rise thereafter to standardised production of forms. Ousterhout (1999), 33.
[39] Ousterhout has made the point that a typological approach is particularly unhelpful in understanding Byzantine architecture since it emphasises the static rather than the dynamic in the architecture. The hallmark of middle Byzantine architecture is the immense variety around a single type. Ousterhout (1996), 21-33, 23.

approach is tenacious, continuing to form the general basis for the arrangement of the material in handbooks and studies.[40]

Within a region, however, a typological approach cannot be so easily dismissed. In an individual region there would be a limited number of structures, the dating for which, in a general sense, could be ascertained through historical evidence and where individual and local differences can be identified.[41] What is important is to properly identify the region. In the not too distant past regional identifications have been tainted, in part, by modern nationalisms and political ideologies.[42] Even more recent studies sometimes appear limited in part by modern political boundaries.[43] There have been few studies in depth of middle Byzantine architecture which take as their focus a Byzantine view of regionality.[44]

[40] Ousterhout states that it remains the "standard approach"; Ousterhout (1999), 25. In Krautheimer (1986) "the cross-domed church" has a chapter (13) all to itself. The recent study by Ćurčić of architecture in the Balkans divides the material in each chapter of the Byzantine period on a strictly typological basis. Ćurčić (2010).

[41] The converse is also relevant. Typological differences may be an indicator of distance between centres of production. Ousterhout (1999), 27.

[42] Ćurčić (2003), 65-84, 65 and most recently Ćurčić (2010), 8-10.

[43] There have studies of the Byzantine churches of (e.g.) Greece, of Bulgaria and of the Crimea which closely examine those individual groups without an initial examination of the wider regions each originally occupied. Such studies, whilst useful in adding to the corpus of material also do little to reduce the fragmentary understanding of overall development. Indeed in some instances they can hinder it by seeking to link local structures to distant types with little supporting evidence whilst ignoring building in an adjoining territory. An example is a recent study of churches in Alania where the author sought to compare tenth-century buildings with a wrongly dated structure in Trebizond. Arzhantseva (2002), 20.

[44] A point recently made by Ćurčić (2010), 10. A "region" here does not necessarily mean a theme or other political or administrative district. The boundaries of those would not necessarily equate to, or be co-extensive with an area whose inhabitants professed a distinct cultural outlook although this might develop over time assisted by such boundaries. In our period it would be highly unlikely that the inhabitants of the newly formed theme of Paphlagonia, for example, would have a culture distinct from the larger theme out of which it was carved. Cultural differences may have arisen between the coastal dwellers and those inland, south of the mountain barrier, within the same theme, by reason of geography and the cultural connections facilitated or hindered by it. Buchwald recognises the issue in his discussion of western Asia Minor generally as a region which had, as he argues, a pivotal role in the production of the basic forms of Byzantine architecture. Buchwald (1984), 199-234, particularly at 199 with a critique of the broad typological approach of (*inter alia*) Krautheimer (1986).

The functional approach has clear drawbacks if utilised in isolation of other evidence. The identification of a building as a church purely on the appearance of a ground plan and orientation without other contextual evidence is risky.[45] As Buchwald observes, different building forms were used for the same purpose and the same building may have been used for different purposes.[46]

Mango identifies an historical approach as a synthesis of evidence provided by the other approaches together with information available from material of the relevant period unrelated to building operations. This approach recognises that buildings are not erected in a vacuum but are a response to the nature of the societies of their times. This approach has a single great weakness, which Mango himself recognises, namely the tendency to focus deeply on individual areas or zones where the evidence, in the form of the buildings themselves and other sources, is relatively more plentiful.[47] This creates, in part, a somewhat disjointed appreciation of Byzantine architecture as a comprehensive whole and militates against a synthesis of the whole corpus of material. In his text on Byzantine architecture, Mango, whilst preferring this approach, recognises the limitation and seeks, in his own words, to pose questions rather than to solve them.[48]

Buchwald goes further than Mango in identifying no fewer than eight approaches to understanding architectural developments. In addition to Mango's classification he

[45] Mango (1978), 8. After the 4th century one could not with confidence identify the use a building was put merely by a foundation shape or other architectural setting. Ousterhout (1999), 29.
[46] Buchwald (1986), 2.
[47] Mango (1978), 8-9.
[48] Ibid, 6.

differentiates between the geographic, symbolic/iconographic, socio-economic, the narrow focused and the stylistic.[49]

The geographic involves the consideration of buildings sharing the same geographic location. Allied to this is an approach Ousterhout has labelled the topographic.[50] A geographic approach is essential to a study having a regional/cultural focus where it is necessary to identify true regional variables. Recognising that buildings, and in particular church structures, cannot be wholly divorced from the contexts in which they are placed, Ousterhout argues that part of the explanation for the wide variations on a basic design can be found in an examination of the part played by the structure in its landscape.[51]

The symbolic/iconographic considers various aspects of a building from the point of view of their individual symbolic values. An example is the question of the importance of the dome which has long been an issue of debate. It is, however, not the only element of a church building (apart from its internal decoration and furnishings) which could carry symbolic value. Other examples might be the insertion of decorative *spolia* (both in respect of choice and positioning), the shape of a foundation ground plan (cruciform, multi-lobed, orientation) and the manner in which the assemblage of the structure is viewed and understood from the outside (e.g. a rising cumulation of elements culminating in the main dome).

[49] Buchwald (1986), in Buchwald (1999), VII, 1-3.
[50] Ousterhout (2000), 242.
[51] Ousterhout refers to the example of the Church of the Chora, Constantinople, dedicated to the Virgin, long held to be the protector of the city. The positioning of the church adjacent to the city's protective walls, he argues, was deliberate placement. Ibid, 244.

Buchwald considers this approach as unlikely to be fruitful as a tool to "organise the vast body of Byzantine architecture"[52] and because, moreover, issues (such as the dome) are inadequately documented and views are speculative. I suggest that this is far too dismissive of what could well be a means to better understand developments at least within clearly defined regional limits or time span. There has been little attention paid to the concern for the external physical appearance of middle Byzantine structures when that is, by common consent, accepted to be one of that period's defining architectural characteristics.[53]

Socio-economic considerations are little pursued in studies of Byzantine architecture although such issues are often mentioned in discussion. The degree of complexity or size of structures might be explained by reference to relative poverty in the region, the number of structures present by reference to an area of economic importance and so on. Buchwald rightly says the approach is undeveloped and considers it, as a tool, inadequate to the task of organising architectural forms. Since Buchwald is seeking to advance a theory of architectural forms across the empire as a whole perhaps his comment is valid. However the pursuit of the identification of forms is, in itself, only one aspect of the search to understand the development of Byzantine architecture and, for the reasons mentioned above in relation to the symbolic/iconographic approach, socio-economic considerations cannot be discounted if one is to look at developments within a region or a specific time span. Its use, as Buchwald states, is dependant, as indeed are all other approaches, upon the availability of supporting evidence such as written sources. This situation can indeed be even more complex. There are structures built with low grade building material, seemingly revealing relative poverty, yet

[52] Buchwald (1986), 3.
[53] Mango (1978), 137; Krautheimer, (1986), 353. .

nonetheless having a complexity of design denying such an assumption.[54] A region which on all other available evidence, appears to be the focus for (e.g.) imperial funding may yet produce structures seemingly lacking contemporary features.[55]

The "narrow focus" he identifies is concerned with consideration of specific issues such as masonry techniques, floorplans, brick patterning or metrology. Buchwald argues that such a focus creates a fragmentary understanding of the development of Byzantine architecture. Once again, in terms of what he was trying to achieve by way of a comprehensive model of the development of architecture across the imperial time line, this comment has some validity. Nevertheless a full understanding of the development of architecture cannot ignore individual aspects each of which may have its own peculiar genesis and developmental history. Why should, indeed, a masonry technique or a floorplan (for example) developed in one region necessarily follow the same developmental history as the external decoration it displays?

Stylistic considerations involve one identifying periods of artistic activity (e.g. the Renaissance). Once again a weakness in this approach, in the opinion of Buchwald, is that it does not assist in the formulation of an all enveloping scheme for the understanding of the development of Byzantine architecture. Stylistic issues, in a study with a regional focus, cannot be sidelined since they might provide evidence of, for example, local building techniques and the presence of identifiable workshops. In

[54] An example is Church No.9 in Cherson on which more below pp. 247-50. There are examples from all periods where inventiveness in design does not go hand in hand with build quality or accuracy in foundation layout (e.g. SS Sergius and Bacchus, Constantinople, St Andrew, Peristerai and H. Loukas, Phocis). Mango (1978), 59, 116, 118; Krautheimer (1986), 372. Such examples suggest a traditional separation, from the early to the middle Byzantine periods, of the draftsmen from the trade of builder.
[55] The two churches in Amastris dated to the 9th century (on which more later, pp. 89-113) seem remarkably out of line with other contemporary church building yet there was significant imperial defensive building taking place around them.

zones where there is regional communication, stylistic similarities may signpost cultural interchange.

Ousterhout has argued that close inspection of detail will reveal the differences associated with workshop practice. Scholarship appears agreed that in the middle Byzantine period construction was a craft skill developed in workshops and passed down in an apprentice style, master to trainee.[56] Certainly no manuals survive nor architectural drawings. Nor are there references to builders as holders of exalted professional status. Individual workshops operating in relative isolation would necessarily develop idiosyncratic variations whilst conforming to such elements as were necessary to comply with Orthodoxy (the canonical zone).[57] Identifying the differences in the non-canonical zone of the buildings has potential to assist in identifying regional difference and tracing cultural influence.

3.2 The choice of approach.

It is clear from its title that the present study has a regional focus. Indeed the analysis of the architecture for the period in question may reveal characteristics which enable the zone to be properly referred to as a region in the cultural sense. The study will therefore perforce entail a multifaceted approach to the buildings and the areas involved. It will, specifically, involve the adoption of a number of the approaches

[56] Ousterhout (1999), Ch. 2.
[57] The guild structure revealed in the *Book of the Prefect* implies both membership of and close control by the guild as a pre-requisite to being able to trade. The closed shop arrangement would limit the movement of tradesmen as well as competition, assuming similar structures operated in other settlements of the empire. The policing of penalties and statutory limitation periods governing negligent contractors, furthermore, could only have been effective where there were stable, established workshops carrying on activities in succession. *Book of the Prefect*, 22 (contractors of all kinds). As to what is meant by "canonical zone" see pp. 3-4 above.

reviewed above. The primary approach will be the one characterised by Mango as "historical", viewing the material as products of their geopolitical and cultural contexts.[58] As Ćurčić has recently observed in his study of architecture in the Balkans, "architecture becomes a tool for a better understanding of history, while a single building becomes a historical document…"[59] It is necessary to identify the choices made locally which differ from those made elsewhere, and what led to those choices being made. To the extent that similar choices were being made in different areas, was there a commonality of solution or a significant differentiation?

Such a multifaceted approach to analysis of buildings has been adopted in both eastern and western scholarship in recent years. Ćurčić has most recently explicitly adopted such an approach in order to properly assess the architecture of the Balkan peninsula as it developed from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries and to seek to detect the forces responsible for shaping traditions and to "illuminate (the buildings') meaning more adequately; to explain both similarity and difference.[60]

Lositsky has argued that an analysis of masonry types, foundation design (particularly apse configuration) and metrological issues might assist in identifying regional variances.[61] His study, involving an analysis of various structures in the Crimea from the fifth to the fourteenth centuries, was less than successful in its conclusions, the main one, somewhat prosaically, being that the Crimean churches much resembled those being erected elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire. This occurred because he was insufficiently discriminatory in the way he analysed the buildings. He did not seek to

[58] Eastmond (2004), 17.
[59] Ćurčić (2010), 7.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Lositsky (1990). 33-47.

differentiate between other factors which may have played their part in the different periods of a history he analyzed spanning some 700 years, nor did he adequately seek to identify those aspects of a building which might more readily assert a regional identity. Those failings do not of themselves invalidate the potential usefulness of the approach he adopted.

A more successful endeavour was made more recently by Eastmond in his examination of the architecture of the Empire of Trebizond in particular the church of Hagia Sophia.[62] His thesis was to identity that church as a specifically regional building from both a political/ideological and a regional/cultural viewpoint. To ascertain the evidence for this he examined the building in terms of its location, the choice of materials and the choices made in respect of figurative and non-figurative decoration of all types, recognising that the incorporation of *spolia* is as much an element of deliberate design choice as a decorative scheme created and applied *de novo*.[63] Choices made by the builders and their patrons on these issues as well as the decisions made in placement of decorative elements are all signifiers of identity.

Eastmond went further and rightly differentiated between those elements of design and construction which are imposed as a result of ideological imperatives and others which may arise variously through a patron's, or a builder's, personal choice, availability of materials or occur through a subconscious adoption of localised tradition. As he says, "not all elements of a church are subject to the same level of self conscious scrutiny".[64]

[62] Eastmond (2004).
[63] Ibid, 44ff.
[64] Ibid,16.

The sometimes somewhat unexpected results such a close examination can produce in a given area are revealed by a study undertaken by Buchwald of Lascarid architecture of the thirteenth century centred on Nikaia.[65] A close examination of a group of churches and palace structures associated with one area and one dynasty over a relatively short period (1220 – 1265) produced a number of contradictory findings. Whilst all of the buildings could be related to each other through a common approach to the articulation of façades and decorative and structural techniques, they were also markedly different from each other in ground plan and vaulting and spatial solutions. Indeed, as Buchwald acknowledged, the dominant characteristic of the group was their significant mutual dissimilarity. Such dissimilarities could not be explained away readily as being a product of different building traditions since those were unlikely to have developed within the physical and temporal confines. Indeed that there was a single local building tradition in place was revealed graphically by the great similarity in façade decoration.[66] It strikingly illustrates the fact that external display, both in development and application deserve attention quite separate from that devoted to basic forms and styles of structure.

4. Scholarship on external display.

There has been no systematic study of external display.[67] The contributions made to the subject in modern times have been piecemeal both as to typology and in terms of derivation and chronological introduction. In one of the most recent texts devoted to Byzantine architecture the presence of external ornament and façade articulation as

[65] Buchwald (1979), 261-296.
[66] Ibid, particularly 280-285.
[67] Krautheimer (1986), 353.

features of middle Byzantine architecture were noted but issues of cause and derivation were not addressed.[68]

Yet as early as 1916 Millet had looked at an aspect of external display, surface decoration through brickwork patterns, and noted the wide variety of types.[69] He speculated that the practice may have arisen as a result of builders habitually inserting bricks to fill mortar gaps. There was no discussion, however, as to when, or indeed why, the inspiration to create ornament arose other than the implicit suggestion that it was a by product of whimsy on the part of builders.[70]

Megaw, building on Millet's work, sought, from a discussion of eleventh- and twelfth-century structures, to develop a method of dating having regard to ornament. Some of the general conclusions he reached retain validity, as will be seen. Brick patternings were not limited to churches where expense was no object,[71] elaborate relief decoration was associated with a particular period,[72] the technique was mastered by the time of the construction of the Katholikon at H. Loukas (1011-22), there was an absence, in general, of a Christological message,[73] and there was a close relationship between Kufic letters and contemporary Arabic inscriptions.[74] Issues of original derivation and identification of causal impulses leading to the introduction of the ornament were not part of the discussion other than that they were perhaps part of

[68] Ousterhout (1999), 194-200 and 206-7.
[69] Millet (1916), 252.
[70] Ibid, 254.
[71] Megaw (1932), 103.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid, 110-11.
[74] Ibid, 104.

the repertoire of Arab builders[75] (the why and where remained unasked and unanswered).

Regional variations in external display have long been noted and there have been many explanations as to how that variation occurred and developed. The identification, in particular, of differences in surface ornament between the capital and provinces has been noted. The so-called Greek (now called "Helladic" to avoid connotations of modern nationalism)[76] school of expression, particularly, has had a tenacious hold on discussions of middle Byzantine architecture in connection with carved brick forms and Kufesque that arose on the Greek mainland. Indeed a "pro-Helladic" group has been identified as making its appearance in the ninth and tenth centuries on the Greek mainland, with elements claimed to have been introduced as far back as the eighth.[77]

Until relatively recently differences between forms of external display have been explained by reference to some peculiarly national traits particularly with reference to structures in modern Bulgaria. Gujelev saw such a national tradition in the embellishment of surfaces with glass ornament.[78] As early as 1940 Rashenov saw a "new approach", not derived from any classical tradition, manifesting itself in Bulgar architecture by way of some "primitive folk culture" particularly identifiable through surface ornament and its disassociation from major architectural forms and absence of

[75] Megaw (1932), 104.
[76] Ćurčić (2010), 9.
[77] Vokotopoulos (1989).
[78] Gjuzelev (1978), 58.

symmetry.[79] Both Gujelev and Rashenov looked to the monuments of Mesembria for evidence of their propositions. Mijatev saw the great variety of forms unearthed in Bulgaria as indicative of a Bulgar national element. Quite apart from the anomalous position of Mesembria, such views are no longer seen as tenable. Vokotopoulos is in no doubt that the architecture of the tenth century in the Balkan peninsula was not an autonomous group and the area was not responsible for novel church design. He detects the influence of Constantinople in Preslav, Macedonia and Greece.[80]

The concern to identify and differentiate between regions and "schools" nonetheless continues to be the focus of studies. Vocotopoulos has called for studies covering areas that constituted administrative units in the Byzantine Empire.[81] Whilst such an approach might be appropriate to identify the extent to which a regional identity could arise as a result of administrative organisation it would perhaps hide or obscure the reason for the influence of one region or city on another. Indeed it confuses true cultural regions with administrative borders imposed from outside. Bounds of cultural identity are rarely administratively fixed. It is also appropriate to enquire from whence the original impulse to locate display on the exterior came from. The explanation for perceived differences may lie in a combination of both local and centrally derived practices.

Differences have been said to arise from workshop practices passing on traditions through localised master and apprentice relationships accentuated, perhaps, by the

[79] Raschenov (1940), 355-6.
[80] Vocotopoulos (1981), 556.
[81] Ibid, 553.

sometime presence of artisans from a foreign, non-Christian, tradition.[82] The development of surface ornament as a means of expression of the exterior rather than, as in the capital, surface modelling has been seen as a function of differences in "sophistication".[83] Such an argument is clearly based upon an assumption that the urge to exhibit the exterior surface was a factor common to both "traditions" and, if so, begs the question as to why and how such divergence occurred.

5. The meaning and forms of external display.

The examination of specific Black Sea structures in chapters II to IV and contemporary structures elsewhere will reveal two main groups of external embellishment.

(a) Surface ornament. This was achieved in a variety of ways: the application of brick and tile in patterns to facades; the deliberate choice of construction material to present a colourful contrast; or the application of string courses with saw tooth bands.[84] Facades were also enlivened by the insertion of carefully chosen *spolia* and occasionally friezes or plaques of dedicatory inscription were also inserted.[85]

[82] Ousterhout (1999), 200. Miles (1964).
[83] Epstein (1980), 193.
[84] Saw tooth bands appear in Mesembria and Kastoria but differently applied (see pp. 155-7). They are used extensively in tenth and eleventh century churches to enliven walls; Krautheimer (1986), 381-395. In the eleventh century and into the late Byzantine period the forms and variety became more highly developed. Figural and vegetal designs, including forms imported from Western tradition are created through the use of stucco or shallow sculpture as on the Pantanassa at Mistra (1428); Mango (1985), 159-60. The range of forms becomes very wide, from fretwork and meander patterns in brick to reticulate and chequerboard patterns in tile and stone. Such complex patterns can be seen on the South Church of Constantine Lips (1282/1304) which structure also, with its alternating bands of white ashlar and red brick, is an example of disply through masonry colour; Krautheimer (1986), 425-6.
[85] The use of *spolia* will be examined in Amastris (pp. 72-5, 84-5). Examples of the use of dedicatory inscriptions are the Panaghia at Skripou recently discussed by Papalexandrou (2001) and (2007), and the barely visible cornice band on the North Church of Constantine Lips (fig. 86)

The form can be subdivided. Saw tooth bands might be inserted to emphasise architectural elements such as arches or niches or zones such as apses and drums carrying the dome, or to divide registers or enliven otherwise plain surfaces.[86] In other structures the ornament might be applied to whole surfaces without apparent regard to major architectural lines or zones of liturgical or canonical importance.[87] Furthermore the ornament might carry additional meaning. Inscriptions are a clear example but even here one might differentiate between those placed to facilitate reading and those not so placed; where the presence of the inscription is more meaningful than the words it records.[88] The patterns might incorporate apparent Christological symbols most particularly the cross or a stylised Chi-Rho.[89] Such symbols might also appear as isolated forms placed apart from zones of general ornament. There are also patterns that imitate or strongly suggest lettering albeit in unintelligible forms. [90]

(b) Surface modelling and articulation. By this I mean the overall shape given to a structure (rounded or polygonal apses) and the emphatic presentation of facades through the application of pilasters, blind arches, niches, corbel tables and the multiple recessions of planes. As with surface ornament, here too we may detect subdivision between structures where modelling reflects structure, the pilasters and blind arches, for example, reflecting supporting piers and vaulting, and those where there is no relationship between modelling and structural members.[91]

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[86] As can be seen on the eleventh century Greek churches, see n. 84 above.
[87] This feature is observable on the Amastris churches, (pp. 92, and 103-4).
[88] The issue of the insertion of inscriptions on buildings where the words are purely visual and intended to be viewed rather than read has been recently considered by James (2007).
[89] Such patterns can be discerned at Kastoria and in Mesembria (see pp. 145-8, 156-7). Epstein (1980), 194 n.14.
[90] Epstein (1980), 194.
[91] Ousterhout (1999), 206-7. This aspect will be considered in relation to the Mesembrian churches and Bulgar building generally; see chapter III, pp. 161-72.

(c) Display through structure

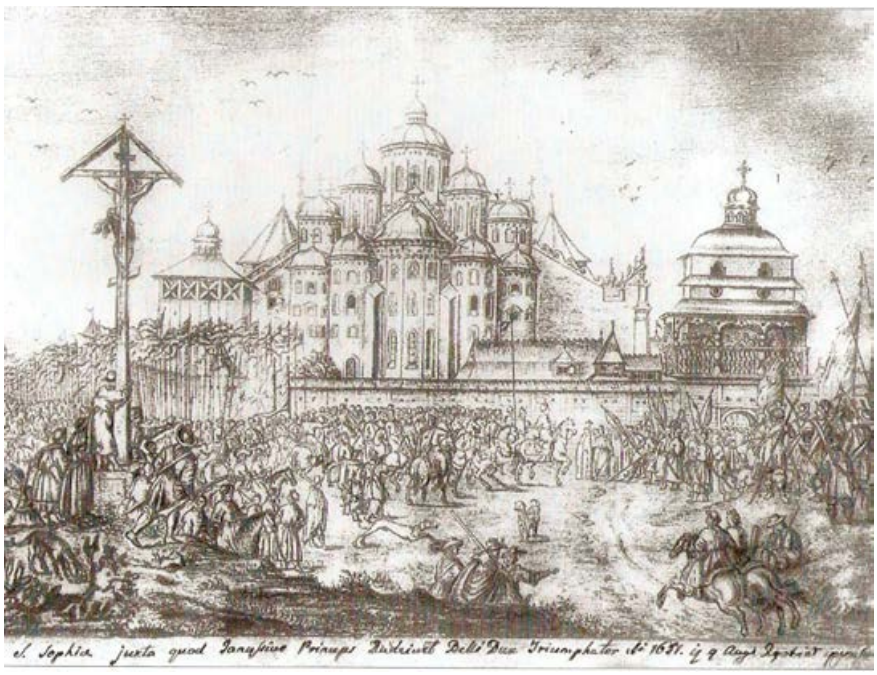
There is a third form of external display with which this study will be concerned, namely the external arrangement or articulation of the masses that make up the structure. Here the interior spatial essentials are not merely revealed in a functional manner. The exterior arrangement of the structure itself becomes expressive in its own right. Masses become directional, declaratory and purposeful. This is achieved through the addition of spatial elements symmetrically disposed around the basic core of the church and arranged so as to promote a sense of verticality and relative importance. We will examine structures in Cherson and neighbouring areas to the north and west of the Black Sea where such display is evident.[92] These elements can be seen to come together in a structure erected at the close of our period, in a territory, that of Kievan Rus', that, though politically independent of Byzantium, had been newly brought to Orthodoxy. We shall detect a close relationship between Cherson and Rus' and a close involvement of Cherson in the conversion activities of Byzantium on the north Black Sea.

In the first quarter of the eleventh century, in Kiev, at the instigation of Jaroslav the Wise (1019-1054), construction began of Sv. Sophia.[93]The core is a straight forward cross-in-square which has been expanded on all sides by additional bays carried on a repeated system of piers and vaults creating a five aisled structure surrounded by an

[92] See chapter IV, pp.250-67.
[93] This is an abbreviation of the Russian and Ukrainian for Holy Wisdom. This designation is used to distinguish the church from H. Sophia, Constantinople or other churches within Byzantium with that dedication.

ambulatory and carrying a gallery on three sides (fig. 81(c)).[94] On the outside the structure was adorned by thirteen domes, creating a pyramidal effect of masses (fig. 1).[95] In plan the pyramidal motif was repeated in the setting out of five apses on the eastern façade[96]. The domed area is "shifted" from the centre to the east further emphasising the eastern elevation from the outside.[97] The original central apse was the height of the roof of the central aisle, i.e. drum height, and the side apses were, in turn, progressively lower once again reinforcing the image of a regular ascension of masses.[98]

Figure 1.



Sv. Sophia, Kiev ca. 1651. Drawing by A. van Westerveldt. Reproduced from Lohvyn, H. 2001. *Sobor Svyatoij Sofij b Kiebi*. Kyiv, p. 31.

[94] Krautheimer refers to this church and the earlier Tithe church as cross domed. By his own definition the core of this church is most assuredly cross-in-square. Krautheimer (1986), 295. The two extra aisles to the north and south were later additions.
[95] See, for a discussion of the reconstruction Lohvyn (2001), 48-57.
[96] The issue of whether the centring of apses can be an aid to the relative dating of churches and to the detection of building "schools" has been addressed. Parshina (1988), 50. The conclusions are unsatisfactory because of the limited sample size (11 examples) and restricted range (Crimea and Kievan Rus'). As a proposition, however, it is not without merit, as later discussion will seek to show.
[97] Faensen and Ivanov (1975), 50.
[98] Ibid, 329-30.

The elements of the building that can be seen to combine to create a totality of display are:

a. The broad nature of the ground plan resulting from an expansion of the square core in the north-south axis by the additional aisles resulting in a building noticeably more wide than long.[99]
b. In plan, the arrangement of additional spaces at the eastern end and their arrangement, through staggered centring, to create an arrowhead formation suggestive of a hierarchy of spaces.
c. The visibility of these additional spaces in elevation and their arrangement in a symmetrical step-wise accumulation, massing towards the central dome in a pyramidal assembly, effectively matching the thrust easterly of the ground plan.
d. The multiple domes crowning the centre and corner spaces but particularly focused at the eastern elevation, further emphasising the upward and hierarchical cumulation of masses and emphasising the eastern end.
e. In its original form the emphatic presentation of the tripartite apse arising not only through the staggered centring of the apses, but also through their height and mass further visibly emphasising the eastern elevation.
f. The shifting of the central domed space perceptibly eastwards providing, thereby, additional emphasis to the eastern end, and, at that elevation, additional visible force to the hierarchical assembly of domes.

They are altogether elements of external structural display.

[99] From the eleventh century the width of the Rus' church was the dominant lateral dimension, and from the thirteenth century was the prevailing parameter. Rappoport (1995), 125.

6. External architectural display from a Byzantine perspective.

It can be argued that part of the reason external architectural display has received little in the way of sustained scholarly attention is that it seemed to be of little importance to the Byzantines themselves.

Mango has stated that the Byzantine church never developed a "theology of architecture" and save for the canonical essentials, which were of internal significance only, there was never, it seems, any recorded formal requirement of architectural design.[100] Written evidence of the external appearance of buildings is scarce and teasingly reticent about issues of external architectural display.[101]

There is literary evidence of building activity within the capital for the last forty years of the ninth century which provides some information as to forms then prevalent and clues as to when fresh elements of external display were introduced. Much of it is enigmatic. It is certainly not without ambiguity.

6.1. The *Vita Basilii*.[102]

The *Vita Basilii* sets out, as an encomium, the building programme of Basil I (867-86). There are teasing references to what can be read as elements of external appearance. The text refers to many churches being raised from ruins but there is more than rebuilding going on. Some are being constructed in revised forms. The

[100] Mango (1985), 198.
[101] This section, including its title, is inspired by Ousterhout (1999), 33-38.
[102] Theo. Cont. V, pp. 211-353

Church of Christ's Resurrection was now to be vaulted instead of timber roofed.[103] This modification may have been necessary to enable the church to carry a dome. It is a process that has been detected at the lower city church in Amorion where a former basilical structure had been remodelled, ca. 843, to create a square naos to carry a dome.[104] As Ousterhout has rightly observed, it was a recurring facet of Byzantine architecture that structures were remodelled.[105] We perhaps see this process reflected in the various references in the *Life* to "improvements" to structures being carried out.

The major achievement of the programme was clearly the *Nea Ekklesia*. External features are noted particularly the fact that it carried five domes and that the roofs were embellished in brass on the outside. The revetting of walls with marble is also noted but that seems to relate to the interior since there follows a description of the sanctuary.[106] The exterior generally is said to be greatly marvelled but no description of its elevations or layout are provided still less the extent (save for the domes) to which surface ornament or articulation was applied. It is to be noted that themes of newness and freshness, referred liberally throughout the Life, are not applied to the form of the *Nea*. If the domed arrangement was like that of the Holy Apostles, it would not have been novel or, indeed, especially monumental.[107] If the domes were arranged upon corner bays, that format may already have been present in the city. It may well have been the case with the *Nea* that, by the time of its dedication, it represented, albeit splenderously, a form already widespread and unworthy of specific

[103] Theo. Cont. V. 82, p. 324. *14-15*.
[104] Lightfoot and Ivison (1995), 105-120, 107-114.
[105] Ousterhout (1999) Ch. 4, 86-127.
[106] Theo. Cont. V. 84, p. 326. *5-6*.
[107] Buchwald has argued that the *Nea* was, indeed, in the form of the Holy Apostles and not a cross-in-square. Buchwald (1984), 225.

comment in an *ekphrasis* expressing what only what is special or distinctive.[108] The mention of the five domes is made simply as a matter of fact: it is the gleaming of the gold-like brass on the outside which is to catch the eye.

The *Nea* apart, other descriptions in the *Vita* provide some information on the effects to the exterior of buildings resulting from Basil's programme. Not only are they rebuilt, repaired or made more secure there are consistent and frequent references to νέος,[109] newness and freshness, καινός[110] elements newly introduced and εὐπρέπεια,[111] comeliness or fairness in appearance. A chapel dedicated to the Mother of God and some pyramidal shaped residences are specifically referred to as novel in conception.[112] The shrine of Nazarios is said to be rebuilt so as to display greater beauty and dignity, σεμνότης.[113] There is little indication ever given as to how all this was achieved but it seems clear that the exterior presentation of churches now mattered to an extent not seen before. Support for this view is provided by further entries. The church of Elijah had been stifled by surrounding buildings and these were cleared away.[114] The impression given was that the surrounding structures were preventing the church being seen and appreciated. Other new buildings, both civil and ecclesiastical, by magnificence and elegance, are said to far surpass others that presumably have gone before them.[115]

[108] Mango and Ševčenko (1973), 273. Ousterhout (1999) 37.
[109] Theo. Cont. V. 78, p. 324. *4*; 82. p. 324. *11* (the church of the martyr Nazarios); 90, p. 336. *4* (the chapel of the Mother of God), are examples.
[110] One building, indeed, was so novel it was named "Kainourigon", Theo. Cont. V. 89, p. 332.3.
[111] Theo. Cont. V. 88, p. 331. *17-18* (the chapel of the Mother of God).
[112] Ibid, 90, p. 336. *1*.
[113] Ibid, 82 , p.324. *11*. Mango translates this as "nobility" but the word seems, in the context of a building, to be a reference to stateliness. Mango (1972), 193.
[114] Theo. Cont. V.82, p. 325. *4-5*.
[115] Ibid, 87, p. 329. *7-14*.

The persistent reference to elegance suggests that the new beauty may, at least in part, have been achieved through a concern for symmetry and this seems to be specifically confirmed in the mention of the strengthening of the Church of Aemilianus. Here it is renewed as well as supported by the symmetrical placement of tower like structures ἑκατέρωθεν, from each side.[116]

Other parts of the *Vita* suggest that notable novel forms were being erected, and close by the *Nea*. In terms of form, some residences are referred to as having a novel pyramidal shape.[117] This could refer to a pyramidal, and symmetrical, accumulation of forms. Moreover descriptions of other buildings in the *Life* can be understood as referring to the addition of subsidiary chapels and, thus, to the practice of building by symmetric accumulation. The two appear to have been contemporary developments of middle Byzantine architecture.[118] The *Nea* itself is dedicated not only to Christ and the Mother of God but to three others, the Archangel Gabriel, Elijah and St Nicholas. Christ would have occupied the main dome and the Mother of God the conch of the central apse. Those others would have had spaces specifically dedicated to them and possibly such spaces were adorned with the extra domes.[119]

Ćurčić has noted that where subsidiary chapels were added to middle Byzantine structures they were invariably added in symmetrical pairs that complemented the

[116] Theo. Cont. V. 81, p. 324. *8*. Mango translates these as buttresses which is consistent with the overall description and intention, support. Mango (1972), 193. The description however also suggests ostentatiously visible structures which, in the spirit of the overall concern for elegance in the programme, would also have added to the element of display in a similar manner, perhaps, as, later, was made manifest in the Myrelaion.
[117] Theo. Cont. 90, p. 336. *1*.
[118] Ćurčić (1977), 101.
[119] Ibid, 103.

external appearance.[120] Furthermore the presence of those chapels was often marked by additional domes.[121] It is suggested that a process of adding to the central core additional spaces with their presence revealed to the outside is at play in the *Vita*. The church of the Resurrection of Christ mentioned above was also dedicated to St. Anastasia and would have had a chapel specifically for her.[122] Similarly the church of Elijah the Tishbite had annexed to it a chapel to St Clement.[123] The church of St Peter was joined to a chapel of St Michael[124] and the chapel to the Theotokos was placed directly above.[125] The church or chapel of St. Aemilianus was attached to the Theotokos Church at Rhabdos.[126] Elements are clearly here being joined together in an additive process and each, we may confidently conjecture, would be revealed with symmetry, complementary to the architecture and possibly signalled by additional domes.

Another source for the reign of Basil records how he wished to rebuild the Church of the Virgin at Pêgê utilising a "more imposing form".[127] He was prevailed upon, however, only to repair the dome. It seems that there was resistance to some new formulation of a visually imposing kind emanating from the capital. One can only speculate what such form may have been but equally one may propose that it was composed of one or more elements later to be seen in the Myrelaion Church or in the Church of Constantine Lips; perhaps multiple domes, or dramatic structural articulation. The form may have involved the expansion of the central core by the

[120] Ćurčić (1977), 95.
[121] Ćurčić supplied a number of examples: the Great Lavra, Mt. Athos (961), the tenth-century church of H. Achilleos, H. Panteleimon (1164), the Panaghia ton Chalkeon, Thessaloniki (1028) and the north church of Constantine Lips. Ibid, 97-8, 101, 102, 106 and 109.
[122] Theo. Cont. V. 82, p. 324. *11-14*.
[123] Ibid, 87, p. 330. *4-8*, and in which was deposited the martyr's head.
[124] Ibid, 88, p. 331. *13-17*.
[125] Ibid, *17-18*.
[126] Ibid, 81, p. 324. *6-7*.
[127] *De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem*, p.882. trans. Mango (1972), 201-2.

addition of visible elements. The same source reveals that Basil was also seeking to enlarge this church.

Two points can be deduced from this material. Firstly, there is no direct reference to surface ornament. Whether references to new elements or to comeliness and beauty indicated such embellishment is debatable. Either ornament was not applied to Constantinopolitan architecture at this time, or it was so subordinate to the architectural forms as to be of little note for *ekphrasis* purposes.[128] The latter is more likely, as ornament was certainly present: it appears as a dedicatory inscription on a marble cornice strip adorning the apses of the North Church of Constantine Lips (fig. 86), reminiscent, both in type and placement, of the Panaghia at Skripou. In both cases the inscriptions were limited to certain areas of the exterior only and subsidiary to the architecture.

Within the context of the descriptions themselves the emphasis is clearly upon size and shape. Whilst articulation of surfaces might be obliquely suggested as part of the beautifying process there is little doubt that the external display that was being intimated was of architectural masses, enlarged by ancillary spaces that were not only expanding the foundation plans of buildings but also, through symmetry and hierarchical placement, were making them worthy objects for viewing from the outside. The exterior now mattered. Furthermore this new concern for the external presentation extended to both secular and sacred structures. Palace buildings were

[128] The authors of *ekphrases* might not have developed conventions dealing with external display. External appearance was featured when deemed to be significant as it was by Prokopios in connection with H. Sophia (Prokopios, Buildings, I. I, 27-30; its defining external features were its imposition, through mass and height, on the landscape and the harmony of its proportions). The absence of any mention in the *Vita Basilii* seems to confirm that ornament was visibly of minor significance.

being erected in forms with directional and hierarchical statements expressed by their masses.

Secondly the *Vita Basilii* is concerned primarily with repair and not innovation.[129] The remodelling process was already being undertaken both in the city and the provinces and its commencement predated the *Vita* and the Triumph of Orthodoxy. The dome had become an established element of church building by the start of the century. As Ćurčić has shown a tradition of symmetric addition of subsidiary chapels can be traced to the early eighth century in the Byzantine heartland.[130] There is no reason to suppose, in the circumstances, that marrying that tradition with the cross-in-square format should not have begun to occur around the turn of the ninth century, albeit experimentally.[131] There is reason to argue that the form (as against the size and sumptuousness) of the *Nea Ekklesia* was already established. There is no suggestion that Basil himself introduced the novel forms, still less identified the source of them. The Life merely appears to record him utilising some forms that were still seen as bold and novel. For a source that explicitly refers to the wholesale introduction of novelty and confirms the non-Byzantine, indeed non-Christian, inspiration for them we must look to the reports of the earlier buildings of Theophilos.

6.2. The works of Theophilos.[132]

[129] Mango (1972), 181.
[130] Ćurčić (1977), 104 as exemplified by the remains of the church on Tavşan Adası off the coast of Amastris. See above p.101.
[131] Ibid, 110. Ćurčić suggests that, on the evidence of surviving examples, the combination of subsidiary chapels and the cross-in-square was, primarily, a post-Iconoclast era phenomenon. He does not, however, exclude its development pre-843.
[132] The reign of Theophilos and his building works has recently been considered in Brubaker and Haldon (2010), 413-26. See also Brubaker (2011), ch.6 for a discussion of the installation by Theophilos of the "Beautiful Door" at H. Sophia.

Theophilos is recorded as building a new palace on a fresh site on the Asian side of the Bosporus in imitation of Arab models.[133] The short section in the chronicle of the continuator of Theophanes does not explicitly state what elements of Muslim architecture were transposed but there is much that is implicitly suggested. Theophilos obtained information about the splendours of Baghdad through John the Synkellos, later the patriarch John the Grammarian, who himself is said to have been reporting on monuments he had observed some eight or so years earlier during a high level embassy sent to 'Abbasid capital.[134] John, as a churchman of great learning, would undoubtedly have noted the visible expression of both secular and sacred architecture. By the time of the construction of the palace, what John would have been imparting would have been less the minutiae of design than the overall impressions of what made Baghdad architecture so striking for him.

The resulting report was of enormous significance for Theophilos because he copies his new palace ὁμοίως (in like manner), σχήμασι και ποικιλίą (in plans and embellishment)[135], with the sole exception of the Theotokos church built adjacent to the living quarters. Even that, however, was intended to be a highly distinctive triconch of "great beauty and exceptional size". It is clear that what was seen was clearly both sufficiently dramatic and significant for Theophilos to apply its forms and plans wholesale to his palace and such forms were eminently transferable without offence being caused to Orthodox sensibilities. It is hardly conceivable that forms

[133] Theo. Cont. III. 9, p. 98. *14-24*. As to the date of the construction of Bryas, ca. late 838, see Treadgold (1988), 294-5.
[134] As to the date of the embassy of John see Mango (1986), 160, Treadgold (1988), 294.
[135] Ibid, 17-18. Mango translates these words as "in form or decoration". Mango (1972), 160. Ποικιλία originally meant embroidery and, by extension, cunningly wrought; Liddell and Scott (1998), 568. In terms of new building styles it seems a wider sense needs to be understood beyond "decoration" to include shape in elevation and embellishment. That external appearance in terms of decoration was being referred to, is suggested by the chronicler's emphasis that the triconch church differed i.e. in outward appearance.

would be introduced that were redolent or expressive of Islam as a faith. Furthermore the execution of the work at Bryas could only be trusted to a person with patrician rank. This suggests that the work was to be performed with particular care. Even he was subject to oversight by John to ensure accurate reproduction.[136]

The reference to models and plans strongly suggests external appearance was of importance. That is also suggested in the requirement for close supervision of the building work. It would indicate that more was at stake than internal embellishment. It suggests that there was to be an intended impact on a wider audience. That is speculative but Theophilos was a diligent builder, not only within palace areas but also of civic structures such as walls and hospices and, as surviving evidence indicates, he embellished the former, at least, with dedicatory inscriptions bearing his name.[137] The lavishness expended on palatial areas is greatly detailed but only in respect of Bryas are we told the identity of the supervising architect and made aware that something extraordinary was being built.

The sources leave us in no doubt as to the vigour of Theophilos' building activities generally.[138] There appear to have been at least four or five major projects undertaken

[136] Theo. Cont. III. 9, p. 98. *19*. The work is carried out under the directions, ἐξήγησιν, of John. The word suggests close management in the manner of a supervising architect.
[137] In Treadgold's view Theophilos intended his work to be admired for centuries to come and to that end used appropriately skilled workers and did not rush the work. Treadgold (1988), 265-6.
[138] Except for the mention of a chapel attached to the Kamilas complex (Theo. Cont. III. 87, p. 145. *4-6*) together with the Theotokos Church and the triconch at Bryas, there seems to have been a noticeable absence of churches from the emperor's building programmes. It is highly unlikely that a Byzantine emperor, over a thirteen year reign, would not have attended to the construction of churches. That such an omission can be ascribed to Theophilos is barely credible when taking account of the totality of the evidence we have of him that paints an image of a cultured, educated and devout emperor endeavouring to be just to all. He had a particular devotion to the Theotokos and composed hymns (Theo. Cont. III. 87, p. 106-7. Treadgold [1988], 264-5.) The Beautiful Door (new bronze entrance doors) he had installed in H. Sophia with its dedicatory inscription is a surviving testament to his Orthodox credentials. See Treadgold (1988), 323, fig. 50 for an image of the door and a translation of the inscription invoking God's help for Theophilos. The installation of the doors and their wider

in his reign. He clearly paid particular attention to the image to be projected of imperial majesty with the construction of gilded lions framing his throne and the renovation of imperial vestments.[139] He did not just build in volume however. His designs were deemed remarkable.[140]

As well as the explicitly novel buildings of Bryas, other palace constructions have an air of inventiveness about them in respect of their external shape. As well as its embellishment, the external appearance of the "Triconchos" is worthy of mention, as it "rises up in three conches".[141] Another building of similar shape, a *Tetraseron*, seems to defy categorisation by the chronicler.[142] What we are told of his church buildings suggests he built these in new formulations. The triconch church built at Bryas warrants a special mention in part because of its great size.[143] Whilst the triconch, as a form, had a long pedigree, Frantz has observed that combining it with a narthex to achieve the "exceptional size" reported, let alone with a triple apse to comply with liturgical requirements (The side conches could not have served as pastophoria since they were specifically dedicated to women martyrs), whilst rendering it aesthetically pleasing would not have been an easy task.[144] Merely extending one of the bays would have created a nave and have been unsatisfactory. The late tenth- or early eleventh-century triconch church of the Holy Apostles, Athens

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relevance to the issue of the balance of power between church and state has been addressed in Brubaker (2010), 59-60 and Brubaker (2011), ch.6.

[139] Mango (1972), 161.

[140] Theo. Cont. III. 41, p. 139. *17-18*. The attitude displayed by Theophanes Continuatus towards Theophilos is intriguing. As an Iconoclast he should have been subject, in it, to the usual diatribes and invectives reserved for them in much of the surviving writing and indeed that can be detected in ninth-century work where he is portrayed as a savage, profane, demented, god-warring vagabond and tool of the devil; Markopoulos (1998), 41. The description of the Bryas building does not appear particularly polemic in style. It is most likely, therefore, that the construction was simply perceived as "Arabic" in inspiration. Brubaker and Haldon (2010), 422.

[141] Ibid, p. 140. *4*.

[142] Ibid, 20.

[143] Ibid, 9, p. 99. *1-2*.

[144] Frantz (1971), 18.

was built in a manner Frantz characterises as imaginative and sophisticated.[145] The description in the chronicle leads one to suppose a solution of equal merit may have been achieved by Theophilos.

The triconch form is clearly expressive to the exterior, more so than the "standard" cross-in-square. It requires the architect to have close regard to the symmetrical arrangement of forms and spaces around the core and its dome. It is not without significance that the form was chosen by Clement and Naum in Ohrid.[146] It was also the form of the early ninth century palatine chapel at Germigny-des-Prés (806) in far distant Carolingian Gaul[147] and for the Church of the Holy Cross, Aght'amar (915-21).[148] This is not to suggest a connection between those regions but merely to reveal that the triconch was a form chosen in disparate locations where display was important. Theophilos made full use of it, as we saw, in his palace buildings for just such a reason.

What can be deduced generally from this material? It seems that new forms of architectural expression, including of external display, were introduced at imperial level into Byzantine architecture in the first quarter of the ninth century (possibly inspired by Muslim models of both the secular and sacred) and that external display was linked with manifestations of earthly authority. It will be of interest to discern whether the display on structures we shall examine can be said to reflect similar, or other, manifestations of authority or ideology.

[145] Frantz (1971), 18.
[146] Mijatev (1974), 96-7 and figs 101 & 102, pp. 99, 100. Ćurčić (2010), 825.
[147] For a plan and brief description see McClendon (2005), 130-1.
[148] Der Nersessian (1965), 7-10.

7. The period and the region.

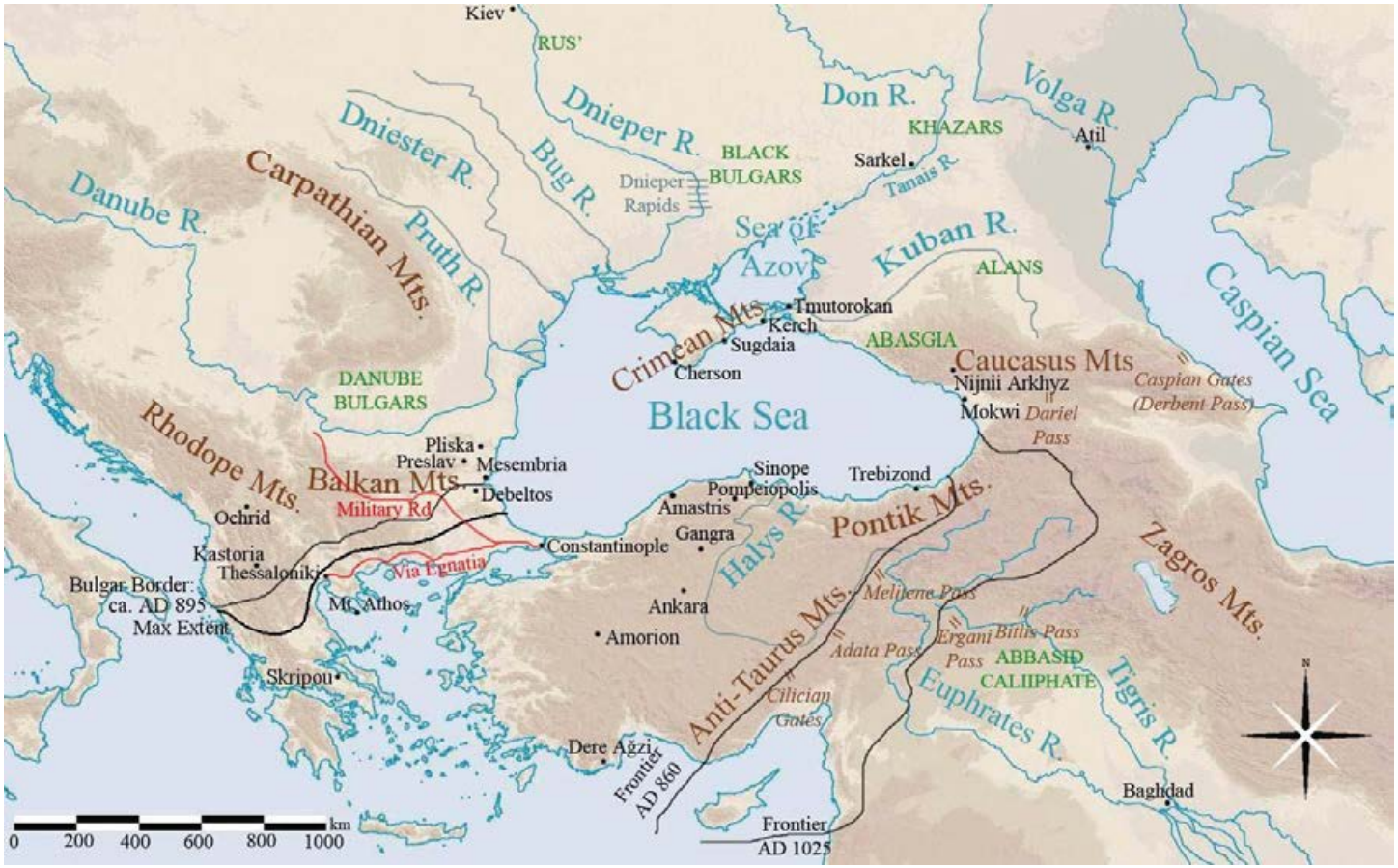
7.1 The Black Sea as a region (fig. 2).[149]

The Black Sea is habitually viewed as a region unto itself not only in an historical context but also in terms of modern political and regional planning.[150] It is self-evidently a closed zone in that there is only one entry and exit point to regions beyond for heavy draft sea borne traffic - the Bosphorus. Anyone setting up trading links around the Black Sea will eventually return to the starting point as the spread of Greek colonies demonstrated. Such would be the case for any inland expanse of

[149] Ćurčić, in his recent study of the development of medieval architecture in the Balkans has sought to delineate the region of his study by reference to geographical boundaries (the Danube and Sava Rivers and the Aegean, Ionian and Black Seas) seeking to avoid modern political connotations and to examine what happened within that single space of what he calls one of "perpetual interaction" of cultural forces. This study seeks to do the same with regard to the Black Sea. Unlike the Black Sea, however, the space Ćurčić identifies was, at least for the period of this study, less of a recognisable region. Firstly it was not seen as one by the Byzantines and their Roman predecessors who perceived it as divided, to the south of the Danube, by a series of mountains running in a straight line from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. This is acknowledged by Ćurčić. That apart, the exclusion of Walachia and Moldavia (modern Romania) is artificial since there was close cultural connection between those areas and both Byzantium and the Bulgar state, indeed a great deal off territory north of the Danube was part of the Bulgar state. Ćurčić (2010), 3-5.

[150] The region has captured the imagination of travellers, scholars, politicians and writers. All, it seems, have made an *a priori* assumption that some elements of shared culture should be exhibited among the peoples on its shores but have found, in all times and ages, evidence of this difficult to identify. Acherson observes how over the centuries peoples have settled on the Black Sea shores as "detritus of human migrations", living then often in deep distrust and loathing of their neighbours but where a pattern of relationships arises through a sharing of place and resources that is unique. The natural and human history of the Black Sea endow the region with a personality as no other; "Black Sea history is first of all the history of the Black Sea". Ascherson (1995), 9-11. King, in his recent history, addresses the issue as to whether the Black Sea is properly a "region". He suggests the hallmark is not commonality of culture, but connections between the peoples sharing a space and in that sense the sea has been more a bridge than a barrier over its recorded past as well as the present even though it may be difficult to discern, certainly in the modern world, any sense of "regional identity". King (2004), 6-12. Malcolmson has meditated upon the legacies of peoples living on cultural faultlines, and on modern nations seeking to "return to Europe". His discussion primarily concerns nations bordering the Black Sea. Malcomson (1994). The Greek heritage peculiar to the Black Sea has been considered in Koromila (2002). Such heritage is now little more than a historical curiosity, Greek speaking populations having ceased to be a living element after the turbulence following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the nationalist movements of the early twentieth century. Recent conferences have pondered issues of regional identity for ancient (the International Scientific Conference "Interstate Relations in the Black Sea Region before the Romans. Economics, Policy, Culture". Sevastopol, 1995) and modern times, (The Black Sea Region: Past, Present and Future. An International Inter-disciplinary Conference, Istanbul, 2004). Modern trading conditions coupled with power bloc politics and the control of natural resources are forcing Black Sea nations to co-operate, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, in a number of regional initiatives such as the 1997 Protocol between Istanbul and Odessa (whereby the two cities become "sisters") and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation.

Figure 2



Black Sea Region

water. With the Black Sea, however, the landward geography (comprising mountains, swamps, lakes and vast rivers) on all sides created effective barriers to movement. The Greek colonisation did not spread far beyond the shores with the exception of Asia Minor where Hellenisation had been achieved from an entirely different direction. The colonies were concerned with maritime trade and important points along the shoreline for exchange had become well established by the time of Strabo. The Tanais River was recognised as the point where Europe and Asia met and nomads from all parts of the known world met at the mouth of the Sea of Azov to trade in slaves, hides, clothing and wine.[151]

An inland sea multiplies the points of political interaction between societies who border it. Instead of a single line of contact there are, in fact, multiple zones providing for the possibility of an increasingly complex web of interactions across the intervening space. The sea itself will be a common provider of food. Such a region, therefore, far from being a barrier, may ultimately provide a focus for the formation of a distinctive identity borne of shared interactions, cultures, bounty and trade. Climate also will play its part by, amongst other things, dictating agricultural possibilities and dietary habits as well as the extent of land use.[152] Even the natural barriers themselves can, in fact, be conduits for cultural flows. It is rare, for example, for a range of mountains not to have passes, which, as Obolensky has said, act as signposts to lands beyond.[153] Rivers are highways actively facilitating movement along them.

[151] Strabo 7.4.5.
[152] Obolensky (1974), 307. Telelis (2000), 224-5, and tables at pp. 235-243 showing periods of drought affecting Constantinople and the Balkans in the ninth to the eleventh centuries. It can be argued that the extent of the Byzantine political borders reflected climatic and, thus, dietary factors. It has been observed that Constantinople never ceased to have a Mediterranean diet: Teal (1959), 100.
[153] Obolensky (1974), 306.

Boundaries themselves, of which political borders are but a subset, are points along which people professing one set of political or cultural values abut another. For political purposes there may be attempts to limit the degree of communication at those zones. Communication across barriers cannot ever, however, be entirely stifled and they inevitably represent zones where cultural influences meet and intermingle. Such borders are characterised by points where trade and diplomatic activity are concentrated and regulated. Settlements either side of such borders will inevitably absorb some characteristics of each other. Whatever may be the nature of the borders or frontiers, they are zones where ideas became influences, where changes can be expected to become visible and cultures are enlivened.[154]

For our period we see, for the ninth and first part of the tenth centuries, the Black Sea bordered variously by the settled nations or polities of Byzantium, the first Bulgar state, the Khazar khaganate and the 'Abbasid caliphate with groups of nomads, Pechenegs, Uzes and Alans, ranging across the lands to the north.[155] We can observe both the complexities of territorial borders and the avenues for potential cultural invasion through rivers and passes as well as the sea itself. The sources for the period reveal that, despite the well documented treacherous nature of its seas and climate the Black Sea was an effective avenue for communication between those peoples, a zone

[154] Such observations in relation to the Black Sea, in its past and present, have recently been made by King (2004), particularly chapters 1 to 3.

[155] There were recognised clan areas (θέματα) of authority. Constantine VII recorded eight of these for the Pechenegs, divided further into 40 areas (μέρη), which were ruled over by, respectively, great and lesser chiefs ('άρχοντες). *DAI*, 37/ 15-33. These areas did not appear to have defined borders but were zones readily created to match the chiefs' status and readily transferable when the nation moved from one geographic region to another. No cities are associated with them. The cities in their lands are deserted former Roman (Byzantine) settlements. Ibid, 58-67

around which were a number of territorial borders but, because of the connecting sea, little in the way of true barriers.[156]

For the ninth and tenth centuries in the Black Sea region there were two clearly identifiable dominant cultures. They were the Byzantine (Christian) and the 'Abbasid (Muslim). The direction, in the end, of the cultural influence on the Black Sea is amply revealed. By the end of the period the complexion of the Black Sea lands had changed. The Byzantine empire had achieved almost total political control of the region and, Kievan Rus' having converted to Orthodoxy, Byzantine cultural hegemony was almost complete.

7.2. The "Sea of the Rum".

It will become clear in the examination of the cities and structures in chapters II to IV the extent to which, and the reasons why, the Black Sea became the focus of imperial attention throughout the ninth and tenth centuries.[157]

[156] The sources applicable to the period will be examined below in Section II in connection with the discussion of the cities on which this study is focussed.

[157] For general histories of this period for both Byzantium and its interractions with its neighbours there was, for long, the work of Jenkins (1966) covering the period from the sixth to the start of the eleventh century now superceded, for the late eighth century to 842, by Treadgold (1988) in which rightful credit is given to the pre-Macedonian emperors for laying the foundations for the later successes of the empire, and most recently Brubaker and Haldon (2010) with a positive re-appraisal of the iconoclast emperors. Whittow (1996) is an up to date assessment of the empire from the seventh to the first quarter of the eleventh century and considers in some detail the empire's military resources as well as relationships with Muslim and non-Muslim neighbours. For a general overview of the cultural and political impact of Byzantium on the peoples bordering it the work of Obolensky (1971) is still of great value for the scope and depth of the scholarship. For relationshiips with Bulgaria, the short work of Browning (1975) remains a valuable and wide ranging survey. For the Rus' the recent study by Franklin and Shepard (1996) is an invaluable and comprehensive overview. There are individual historical overviews of parts of the period such as Holmes (2005) for the reign of Basil II, Stephenson (2003) for a discussion of the late tenth century Balkan frontier and the still valuable study of the period of Constantine VII by Toynbee (1973).

The dominant culture of the region throughout the period was overwhelmingly Byzantine even if the empire did not politically control all its shores. Arab geographers of the ninth century identified the Black Sea as the Sea of Rum.[158] Photios, in the ninth century, reflecting on the success of the empire's missionary programme, referred to it as *pontos eusebes* (the pious or holy sea).[159]

The boast was not misplaced. The first Bulgar state adopted Orthodoxy midway through the ninth century signifying a growing cultural dominance from the empire in the preceding decades. Its leaders were later schooled in the capital. To the north there was a Byzantine outpost in the Crimean peninsula of some strength and vibrancy despite its geographic remoteness from the centre maintaining its own currency and a significant degree of self reliance.[160] As the entries in the *DAI* indicate it was an important base for the annual visits of imperial agents undertaking their diplomatic manoeuvrings amongst the Pechenegs and other nomadic groups ranging across the northern Black Sea territories.[161] Cherson was the base from which Cyril and Methodius sought to convert the Khazars.[162]

On the eastern shores of the Black Sea the principalities of Armenia and Georgia and, from the start of the tenth century, the land of the Alans, were all Orthodox Christian and whilst the first two had, since the sixth century, developed a distinctive architecture, the cultural influence of Byzantium was clear. Alania was fully converted at the start of the tenth century but the ruling elite had long been Orthodox

[158] *Hudúd al-'Álam,* 42.
[159] *PG*, 102, cols. 828-9 (letter to the archbishop of Bosporos). Obolensky (1971), 234.
[160] See chapter IV, pp.176, 203-205.
[161] *DAI*, 1& 7
[162] VC, ch 8.

Christian.[163] The strength of the Byzantine cultural force in Alania was such that an interregnum of Khazar (Jewish) control in the first quarter of the tenth century failed to dislodge it.[164]

Despite the Byzantine cultural preponderance there was another cultural force in operation on the eastern shores. Armenia and Georgia were politically part of the 'Abbasid caliphate that extended north to the Caucasus. As we will see the caliphate, at the start of our period, had adopted a policy of aggressive expansion particularly directed towards Byzantium and, as part of that, had undertaken proselytising activities in the territories on the north of the Black Sea. Muslim cultural influence had extended deep into Khazar territory where mosques were built and Muslims were entitled to be governed and judged by their own customs.[165]

The presence of that political and cultural force, the equal in our period of the Byzantine, as we shall see, caused the empire to react not only politically and militarily but also culturally in particular in the outward expression of its architecture and, most specifically, in its single most important monument to its cultural outlook and worldview, the church.

7.3. The Black Sea cultural links.

The webs of cultural links across the Black Sea in the period were many and varied. Trade linked not only the cities of the empire but also the empire and the Bulgar state, the nomadic tribes, the emergent Rus', the caliphate and, across the north through the

[163] *Hudúd al-'Álam,* 48
[164] See pp. 215-221.
[165] *Hudúd al-'Álam*, 77.

Silk Road the Far East. So crucial were those links that they were the proximate cause of war with Bulgaria lasting over thirty years. The regular treaties with the Rus' revealed the pre-occupation of the latter with obtaining favourable trading status.[166] Trading in luxury goods was the enticement laid out before the Pechenegs. Trade was the means by which Cherson survived. The empire sought to limit the caliphate's Black Sea trading operations by closely limiting its activities in the single major trading entrepot for the region, Constantinople.[167]

Permanent settlement of peoples was also a characteristic of the period. Forced resettlement was a feature of both Byzantine and Bulgar practice in Thrace bringing concomitant cultural influences.[168] Major cities were polyglot. Constantinople had semi-permanent settlements of Muslims, Bulgar and Rus' that required regulation.[169] Cherson certainly had Jewish settlements and almost certainly had semi-permanent groups of Rus' at the same time they arose in the capital. The treaties with the Rus' clearly revealed the interference of the Rus' in the governance of Cherson by the tenth century.[170]

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[166] PC, 6420 (912) & 6453 (945). See further chapter IV, p. 215.

[167] The *Book of the Prefect* reveals specific limitations on the traders of manufactured goods from elsewhere, and specifically the caliphate. They may not remain in the city and may only set up shop in a designated zone. They are thus limited on the level of stock they can carry as well as marketing freedom. Ch 4. The extent of the caliphate's trading activities is also revealed by the extent of the spread of its trading coin, the *dirham*. These are found in hoards in northwest Russia from the late eighth century and were probably entering circulation before then. Franklin and Shepard (1996), 12. There is evidence that the Khazars adopted the *dirham* as the basis of their monetary system. Pritsak (1998), 22-32

[168] Thessaly is said to have contained whole settlements, from the early ninth century, as a result of imperial re-settlement policies, who spoke no Greek whatsoever. Some of the Vlach populace may have been further transplanted when the territory they occupied was taken by Samuel in the late tenth century. Risos (1990), 202-207.

[169] There is no mention of the Rus' in the *Book of the Prefect*. Whilst they may have had a presence there as traders up to the first decade of the tenth century it could only have been as part of the larger *entrepot* of alien traders. Significant groups such as Syrians, Muslims, Bulgars and Jews, and even large groupings from within the empire's borders such as those from Trebizond, had specific mention. The mercantile power and influence of such groups required particular attention. The Rus' settlements were specifically addressed in treaties, see n. 166 above.

[170] PC, 6453 (945) & 6479 (971),

From the mid-ninth century at the latest the empire had embarked upon a programme of evangelism and conversion concentrated on the regions and peoples of the Black Sea that, in the end, was wholly successful. That success could not have been seen as a foregone conclusion at the time as the experience with the Bulgars in the mid ninth century illustrated. The success of the neighbouring caliphate in similar activity in regions to the north of the Black Sea has already been mentioned. As well as the Black Bulgars in the late ninth or early tenth century, the Volga Rus' may have been converted to Islam.[171]

Both the empire and the caliphate were involved in the export of building forms. At the start of our period Petronas is recorded as building a capital city for the Khazars at Sarkel. At the close the Kievan prince is not only taking the emperor's sister as a bride but explicitly taking "Greek" (i.e. Byzantine) builders to construct his capital in stone and brick. After conversion Bulgar church building is unquestionably in Byzantine forms. As Ibn Fadlan reveals the caliphate was also exporting mosque designs to the territory of the Black Bulgars.[172] Mosques were already present on the landscape of the Khazar khaganate.

In short, whilst the Black Sea was, in our period, controlled by the empire, it was a zone where the two great competing east Mediterranean cultures were interacting and competing with each other. That interaction found a visible expression, at the start of the tenth century, in the ceremonial expression of rulership in Armenia. It was revealed, architecturally, in the construction of the Church of the Holy Cross,

[171] Whittow (1996), 253. Beliaev (1999), 99.
[172] Ibn Fadlan, 25.

Aght'amar.[173] We shall see that the interaction also triggered visible expression in Byzantine architecture.

8. The method of approach.

The three Black Sea cities chosen for close examination, Amastris, Mesembria and Cherson, were all, at different times and for differing reasons, the focus of imperial attention in the period covered by this study. One of them, Mesembria, was, for two extended periods, within the political territory of a competing Orthodox state, Bulgaria. All three contain structures that, as we will see can be dated to the period. Differences between them may reveal not only regional variations of strength but also provide clues as to developmental lines and original sources of inspiration.

Each city will be examined in its turn, with attention to its respective role in the history of the region to reveal how and why each came to imperial attention and became integral parts in the empire's operations in the Black Sea. The relevant structures, which include some defensive works, will be described in detail and current scholarship summarised and critically evaluated.

The dating of the structures will then be re-assessed having regard to the historical context revealed in the sources as well as through stylistic comparators. A fresh element will be introduced into the process, that of external embellishment. That aspect of Byzantine architecture, although noted and recorded in reports and studies, has not normally hitherto been given adequate weight in assessments of buildings.

[173] Jones (2007).

This, in great part, has been because of a lack of a systematic study but also insufficient recognition has been given to it as a distinct element of Byzantine architectural practice.

Studies of Byzantine architecture have, by necessity, concentrated on churches. This has led to an intermingling of the discussions of forms and developments in liturgical practice and internal embellishment with icons and, consequently, with issues of form and function. This has led to structures being associated with each other on a consideration of major forms whilst ignoring the enormous dissimilarities in external display.

There is no reason to presume *a priori* that the emergence of external ornament was linked exclusively or even mainly with church building.[174] The observation of Megaw on the absence of Christological symbolism,[175] together with the great variety of forms of expression appearing, as we shall see, at an early date indicate an absence of any form of regulation or control, or even interest, on the part of the church. Ornament should, therefore, be viewed as a separate category of dating material associated with Byzantine architecture generally with the potential to bring with it quite distinct cultural information. This study will seek to demonstrate, in fact, why that is the case.

After having established a relative dating for the buildings considered in this thesis, I will endeavour to address the following specific, interrelated, issues:

[174] Recently iconoclasm has been characterised as simply one of a series of strands of the development of Byzantine culture from the late 7th to the 9th centuries. It is a matter of debate as to whether it impacted upon the state and its culture to the extent hitherto assumed, for example on foreign policy and military and fiscal administration. Brubaker and Haldon (2010), 3-4.
[175] See p.23.

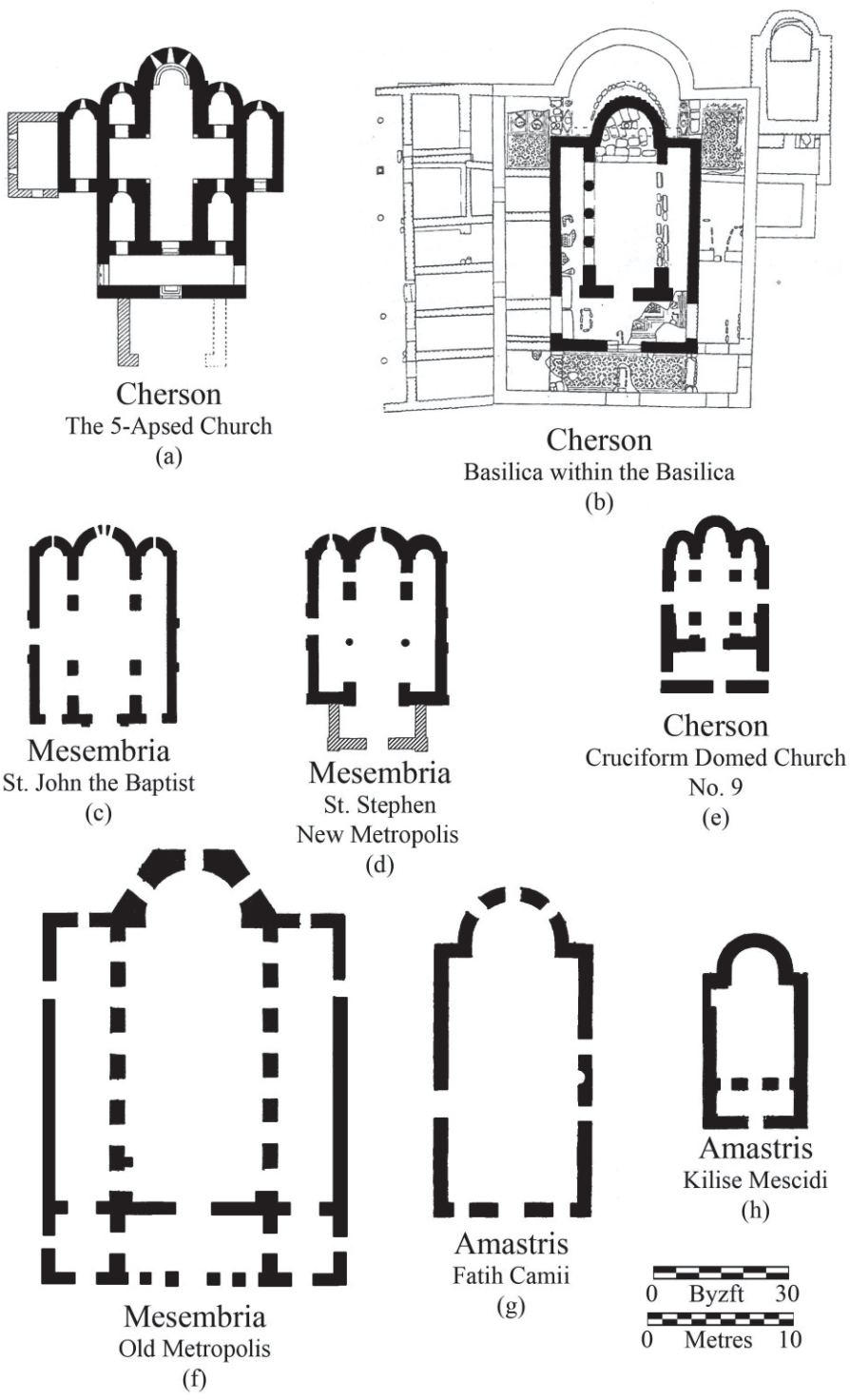
(a) What forms and what manner of application of them can be identified for the period and region and can a more nuanced typological division be discerned?

(b) When and in what circumstances did the impulse to display the exterior of building arise within Byzantium (and the territories under its influence), in the variety of manner revealed?

(c) The identification of the purpose, or purposes, for which external display was marshalled both originally and subsequently.

(d) What, if any, lines of influence can be discerned between the cities and between them and the capital and other zones of the Black Sea; in short, is there evidence of export of forms?

Figure 3.



Church plans: Cherson, Amastris and Mesembria.

II. THE THREE BLACK SEA CITIES: AMASTRIS, THE NAVAL BASE (fig. 4).[176]

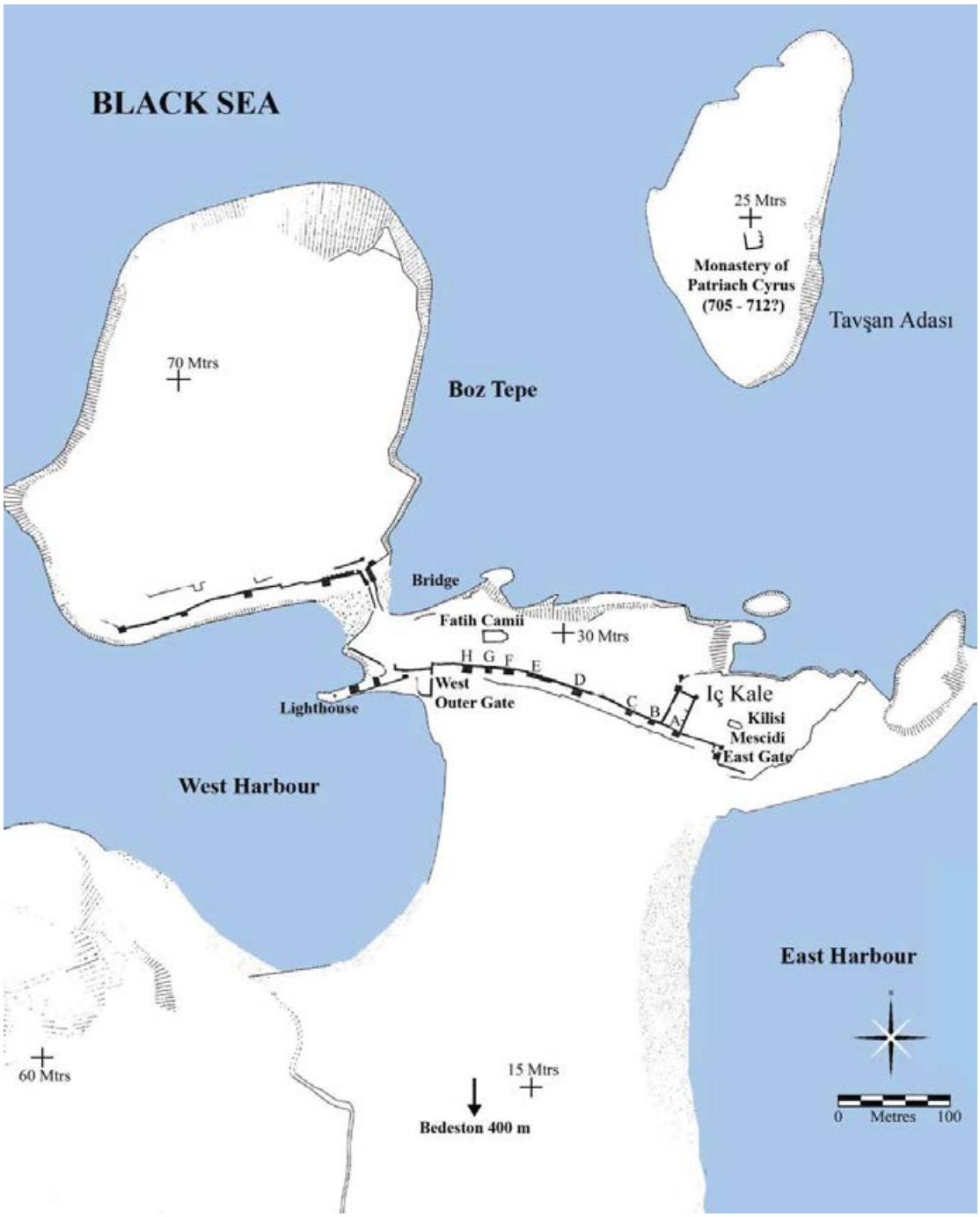
1. Pre-medieval Amastris and the city's geographical position.

Amastris (modern Amasra) was founded as a Greek trading colony (then known as Sasamos) and adopted the name of Amastris in third century BC after that of the Queen of Pontic Herakleia (modern Ereğli), its then ruler.[177] It is one of the few places along the southern Black Sea coast between Constantinople and Sinope (modern Sinop) affording safe anchorage.[178]

The settlement grew to a sizeable and modestly wealthy city in the Roman period extending well to the south of the present town as witness the substantial Roman building now known as the Bedesten about 1.0 km south of the town centre. The area covered by the Bedesten is almost an acre (5,000 sq.m.). Its walls enclose a complexity of spaces. The walls are massive and have extensive *opus reticulatum* facings (figs 5 & 6). Additional Roman works are visible a further 350m further south.[179] Furthermore the presence of numerous marble spoils with fine carving within the medieval town, of large limestone ashlar in the town walls with rusticated facings and material displayed in the town's museum also attest to the town's relative

[176] For general overviews of the history of Amastris see Marek (1989), Crow and Hill (1995) and most recently Zavagno (2009), and in Turkish, Sakaoğlu (1999). For a summary of its history, monuments, sources and bibliography (to 1996) see TIB 9, 161-170. For the southern Black Sea coast, history, geography and development see TIB 9, 48-151. Bryer and Winfield (1985),
[177] Strabo, 12.3.9.
[178] Black Sea Pilot, 428-9. The city's continuing importance into Hellenistic times is attested by areas of defensive walls dateable to that period (unmortared courses of squared blocks distinguishable from the basalt blocks of the early Byzantine construction); Hill (1994), 5.
[179] Marek (1989), 373-389, 380-385; plan of town at 379.

Figure 4.



Amastris.

Figure 5

Amastris. Bedesten.

Figure 6.

Amastris. Bedesten

wealth in the Roman period. *Opus reticulatum*, a first century development in Roman Italy, is rare, albeit seemingly widely dispersed, in Asia Minor.[180]

The settlement shrank significantly in its medieval phase to an area of about 400 sq m behind walling with towers. The walls enclose the head of a peninsula projecting into the Black Sea together with a nearby island (modern Boz Tepe) which is also fortified by westward facing walls and a barbican entrance gate. The configuration of the coast and the linked island creates two natural harbours (now known as the Büyük Liman and Küçük Liman - the large [east] and small [west] harbours).

Here (and for some distance east and west) the ranges of the Anatolian high plateau immediately abut the shoreline, indeed the bulk of the fortified town can be seen as part of the foothills of those mountains. Vertiginous cliffs on Boz Tepe combine with similar on the mainland to create the well protected west harbour. The same geology has, since the time of the settlement's foundation, ensured that it looked to the sea for survival and communication. There were no major Roman roads along the coast. Major thoroughfares passed through Anatolia to the south.[181] Roads which did link the town with the hinterland were (and are) tortuous and winding. From Constantinople to Sinope the mountains run more or less parallel to the coast leaving

[180] Ward –Perkins (1981), 273. It has been found adorning a small bath building at Elaeusa (Ayas), ibid, 305. It has also been found at Sivrihisar, Cappadocia; Restle (1979), 137-8 and plate 193. Hoffmann (1989), 197-210, 198.

[181] The closest primary route runs from Nikomedia to Gangra thence to Amaseia and Nikopolis. See TIB 9, 117-135 for a summary of the primary routes and the north-south connections between them. A coastal road was constructed at the time of Claudius but it bypassed Amastris, going through Bartin to the south, ibid, 161.The likelihood of roads of secondary importance being maintained in the middle Byzantine period is to be doubted. The evidence would seem to indicate that only roads of military importance attracted imperial attention whilst others were left to the local efforts or survival by mere use. Belke (2002), 73-90, 81-90. See also French (1985), 9; French (1987), 10-11 and French (1988), 9, 10 for details of the establishment of particular routes none of which involved a coastal route. Also Bryer and Winfield (1985), 19-39. A summary map of major routes is to be found in Haldon (2001), 79 and in TIB 9, 118.

a very narrow strip of land at best. Even where there were signs of coastal routes linking the capital with settlements eastward along the coast their exact routes are difficult to establish and frequent inland diversions were necessary.[182] The land route from Constantinople to Herakleia (modern Ereğli), about 100 kms west from Amastris along the coast, took eight days; the journey from Herakleia to Amastris a further three days.[183] By sea (a distance of about 400 kms) it would take two to three days at a typical Black Sea speed of 3.5 knots.[184] Strabo characterised Paphlagonia as a region divided into two zones, the coastal and the inland.[185] Even for journeys within Anatolia further to the east a Black Sea route coupled with an inland journey was to be preferred. The journey by land from Constantinople to Theodosioupolis took twenty-five days, whilst the sea journey to Trebizond and a linked journey over the mountains would take a third of the time.[186]

Amastris has been described as the best double inlet harbour on the Black Sea west of Sinope.[187] It is in a favourable position on the main route from Constantinople linking it with both Tauric (modern Crimean) regions on the north coast and Armenia and Chaldia. Amastris lies at the point where a Black Sea current, at a rate of 0.5 to 0.7 knots, flows from the southern Black Sea coast directly to the Crimean peninsula.[188] At this point, with a favourable wind, it was said that the crossing from north to south could be made in forty-eight hours, as witness the translation of the remains of John of Gothia from the Crimea to Amastris in that time.[189] The ability to use that current

[182] TIB 9, 117. See also Zavagno (2009), 131-3) on the communication systems.
[183] Bryer and Winfield (1985), 100.
[184] Pryor (2002), 33-58, 51.
[185] Strabo, 12.3.9
[186] Bryer & Winfield (1985), 18.
[187] Marek (1989), 378.
[188] Black Sea Pilot, 32 -33. Shepard (1974), 18-39, 20-21.
[189] VJG, 70-5, trans. M-F Auzépy (2005), 82.

to cross the Black Sea at its narrowest point had been lost by the time a traveller has reached Sinope notwithstanding the assertion that "the standard crossing" of the Black Sea was from Sinope to Cherson.[190]

2. Medieval Amastris.[191]

Amastris appears on the horizon at the beginning of our period with the mention in Theophanes of the city's administrator, Gregory, being sent, by Emperor Nikephoros, to negotiate with Harun al-Rashid who had penetrated imperial territory as far as Ankara the walls of which Nikephoros had rebuilt the previous year. Its renewed defences had thwarted the Arabs who had withdrawn. The terms of a treaty were agreed, one of which was that the Byzantines would not seek to rebuild fortresses recovered from the Arabs. Nikephoros clearly considered himself to be in a strong position: notwithstanding the conditions to which he had agreed, Theophanes tells us that he immediately built fortresses after the withdrawal of the Arab forces.[192]

Because the administrator Gregory was deemed of sufficient worth to negotiate with Byzantium's most powerful foe on behalf of the emperor it would seem that Amastris had grown in importance. It is also possible that Gregory was involved because Amastris had suffered under Arab raids and was likely to suffer again unless terms

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[190] Zuckerman (1997), 210-222, 213 n.13.

[191] A recent discussion of the development of the city in the period AD 500-900 can be found in Zavagno (2009) in which the author views Amastris as one example of how Byzantine cities became transformed from their late antique forms. He examines the defensive and other structures and the current scholarship in that context. A close consideration of the forms of external display or of the churches does not therefore form part of his discussion. The continuity of settlement within walled defences at Amastris is seen as representative of a pattern repeated over the same period in other Black Sea cities such as Sinope and Cherson. Ibid, 130. The reasons for that development are seen as both strategic and mercantile. For a general summary of developments in the 7th and 8th centuries see Brandes (1989), 133-137.

[192] Theo. 482. Mango & Scott (1997), 662.

could be reached which would safeguard it and, consequently, the Byzantine traffic within the Black Sea. An official who was well acquainted with the situation "on the ground" would have been of value.

In any event Amastris had already achieved some importance ecclesiastically. Some one hundred years previously Justinian II had appointed as patriarch a monk by the name of Cyrus, living alone on an "island of Amastris". It is thought that the "island" is the one now known as Tavşan Adası, which lies about 200 m offshore of the town.[193]

We are fortunate in having a literary source to provide a window on life in Amastris in the first quarter of the ninth century in the form of the Life of George of Amastris composed by Ignatius the Deacon in or about 820.[194] The Life is a product of the second period of Iconoclasm and the Iconoclast sentiments are revealed in a number of passages. The saint is depicted as a living icon endowed with all the Christian virtues thus "giving renown to the prototype", the bread and wine of the Eucharist is specifically referred to as the "Type" of the Divine body and blood and the miracles are performed through the saint and not through painted icons.[195] The text lacks Iconoclast invective, however, treating ("the great")[196] patriarch Tarasios, empress Eirene and her son Constantine VI, all iconophiles, favourably, unlike the Council of

[193] Theo. 375; Mango & Scott (1997), 523.
[194] Ševčenko (1977), 121-5. The Life has not been the subject of any recent critical analysis.
[195] VGA 2, 16, 23, 32 and 37.
[196] VGA 18.

815 that proclaimed Tarasios "injudicious".[197] Such absence of stridency reveals, perhaps, a reluctant Iconoclast.[198]

Whatever the sentiments of the author, the Life, in the context of the saint's miracles, provides information on, amongst other things, the risks of navigation on the Black Sea, damage at the hands of Arab raiders, trading relationships with other Black Sea ports and, possibly, the first attack on Byzantine territory by the Rus'. It also provides some topographical detail for the city itself. Those features are unlikely to be distorted for literary (hagiographic) purposes and can be taken to be reflecting then current concerns and topography. The treachery of Black Sea navigation is amply supported by modern experience. The saint lived from ca. 750-807 (and possibly as late as the 820s)[199] and the Life records conditions in the city and in the region in the last half of the eighth century and the first decades of the ninth. Posthumous miracles, it would seem, extend the narrative to the first third of the ninth century.[200]

An under-lying theme of the Life appears to be a preoccupation with the status of Amastris. There is recognition that it has not hitherto had its share of fame and fortune.[201] Amastris is presented as belonging naturally to the Byzantine heartland centred on Constantinople and not part of a general Pontic zone.[202] There is much emphasis on closeness with the capital. The *Vita* has the semblance of a civic

[197] VGA 18 and 34. For the pronouncement of the Council of 815 see Mango (1986), 169.
[198] Ševčenko (1977), 125. It is, perhaps, more likely the author was concerned less with ideology and more with hierarchy.
[199] See below p.87.
[200] The dating of the posthumous miracles remains subject to debate. See further on this pp. 64-5 and n.237 below.
[201] VGA 3, 21 & 16.
[202] The Life contains a number of sections emphasising a connection not just with the capital but the ruling house, e.g.VGA 21 (the emperor personally involved in arranging the independence of the city from the authority of Gangra) and 34 (the love of the imperial family for the saint who is not often absent from them, and the saint's participation in the court).

brochure seeking outside interest, as well as cementing a local identity, by identifying the city's amenities and emphasising the relevant good fortune and tranquillity it enjoys in a time of some upheaval. It relates that, through the saint, the city did acquire fame and fortune, not least through imperial patronage; it was able to boldly assert independence from the metropolitan see at Gangra. The *Vita* has also been identified as a vehicle for the promotion of the city for a locally based cult with all the concomitant financial benefits.[203]

There is more revealed, however, than local "patriotism". The Life reflects much on the issue of trade and how the growth in it affects both the city and wider Black Sea region. A fully monetised economy had yet to be established as the eighth century closed.[204] Until the beginning of the ninth century there was a noticeable lack of circulation of copper and silver coin which pointed to the absence of money based transactions and the preponderance of trade by barter.[205] Trade, particularly through Black Sea ports, however, had begun to flourish. These ports had additional importance as Anatolia replaced Egypt as the empire's grain supplier.[206] Arab raids and conquest also pushed the Anatolian inland trade routes northwards to the Black Sea.[207] Cities through which trade was channelled began to see their opportunities and

[203] Foss has argued that the promulgation of the Life may point to an attempt to create a pilgrimage site. Active promotion of pilgrimage sites was a widespread phenomenon from the early Byzantine period. In the tenth century a pilgrim returning from the Holy Land through Asia Minor paid homage at five major shrines on his way to Constantinople. Eight sites in Asia Minor have been identified as of considerable importance and these drew large numbers of people from long distances and, crucially, the pilgrims of high rank. Sources reveal there were a considerable number of sites being promoted only some of which became established as the focus of cults. Foss (2002), 132-3. The Life of George of Amastris is one attempt to create a cult that failed despite the city's easy reach from Constantinople and the other "selling features" detailed in the Life as well as the potential for the spread of a cult across the Black Sea by travellers in the military. A successful example of the latter was the spread, by sailors, of the fifth century cult of St Phokas from Sinope to Trebizond in the tenth century; ibid, p. 135.
[204] Haldon (2000), 228.
[205] Ibid, 225-264, 228.
[206] Ibid, 224.
[207] Ibid, 257.

this fostered a growth of local identification and concomitant rivalries with other towns with which they competed for trade.

Places where barter trade occurred (ports and border posts among them) had advantages. If they could also demonstrate stability and relative safety they stood a greater chance of securing imperial patronage leading, then, to the setting up, locally, of imperial administrative bureaucracy.[208] The role of a celebrated local churchman of great repute was essential to the process of promoting the city to imperial attention. These are the aspects that permeate the Life of George of Amastris.

2.1. Trade[209]

The city's dependence on trade and the problems it brought with it are given graphic attention.

The VGA refers to the evils attendant on "discovering" commerce.[210] That might suggest the city had recently (i.e. in the last half of the eighth century) begun to be involved in trade to a greater extent than hitherto. The trade is said to be by both land and sea although it is the sea borne traffic that is clearly paramount. Commerce brought with it "bitter fruits" of avarice and social inequalities bringing in their wake crimes of envy such as robbery.[211] The jealousies referred to would not only be those between traders within the city but also between Amastris and other trading entrepots

[208] Haldon & Kennedy (1980), 79-116, 92-94.
[209] The movement of goods and trade (internal and foreign) in the period of iconoclasm has been recently considered in Brubaker and Haldon (2010), 506ff. for links between Amastris, Cherson and Sugdaia and the level of Black Sea trade generally see 514-20.
[210] VGA 33.
[211] VGA 33 & 39.

jostling for business.[212] It may be that commerce within the city was regulated to an extent by a guild system similar to that operating in Constantinople and revealed in the Book of the Prefect. Indeed there is mention of the existence of "customs" of the city of Trebizond, breach of which by foreign traders incurred severe penalties.[213] Such guilds would have a system of monetary penalties (fines) the imposition of which is also one of the concerns set out in the Life.[214] The intercity friction could erupt into open hostility. At best relations seemed to be characterised by harassment, detentions, capriciousness and generally unfair trading practices.[215] Aggressive marketing by traders from Trebizond in perfumery in the capital was of such concern at the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century that it had to be the subject of specific regulation.[216]

The risks attendant on the Black Sea trade are also highlighted. Although travel by sea was preferred (to both Constantinople and Trebizond) the journey was fraught with danger. A calm sea was worthy of special mention.[217] The social cost of the trade was regularly measured in shipwreck.[218] Natural forces in the Black Sea also brought flood and storm.[219] The sea is an ever present preoccupation of the writer of the Life.

The growth in importance of Amastris and Black Sea trade is certainly explicable. Anatolia and non Mediterranean trade routes were crucial to the empire following the

[212] This seems to be what is being described in VGA 27 when Amastris merchants are arrested in Trebizond on false accusations arising from jealousy.
[213] VGA 29.
[214] For example as referred to in *Book of the Prefect,* para 22.
[215] See n. 212.
[216] The *Book of the Prefect*, para 10. Trading was limited to certain days only and the merchants were strictly enjoined neither to undercut local businesses nor to stockpile with a view to influencing supply and price.
[217] VGA 28 & 36.
[218] VGA 33 & 36.
[219] VGA 28 (the calmness of the sea was worthy of special mention and indicative of the saint's standing as he voyaged on it), 36 & 42.

permanent loss of Egypt, the Levant and Syria in the seventh century and which formerly supplied much of the grain. Trading across the Mediterranean was also a risky affair due to Arab naval activities. The importance of this region of the Black Sea trading network in the late seventh and eighth centuries is confirmed by the discovery of seals, dateable to that period, of *kommerkiarioi* (imperial officials concerned with control of traffic in certain materials) for Paphlagonia and Honorias, one at least found in the Crimea.[220] A badly preserved seal (and unpublished with an unknown provenance) "probably" refers to a "*kommerkia apothekes Amastris*". [221]

2.2. Governance and Regulation

Amastris was shown to be (thanks to the saint) well ordered and properly and fairly governed and thus its glory exceeded that of other cities.[222] That there were problems in the city (and presumably other trading entrepots) is also explicit. There was public and private debt and the burden of fines possibly levied by local trading guilds.[223] Imperial taxes and like impositions were additional burdens.[224] The impression is of a town struggling to free itself from unreasonable and oppressive regulation in order to take full advantage of the opportunities that trade was now giving it. Perhaps the fiscal burdens were the ones imposed by Emperor Nikephoros in his tax reforms of 810 which included rescission of the immunity from taxation granted by Irene to the church and monks as well as a provision relating specifically to ship owners requiring

[220] Šandrovskaja, (1993), 86- 89; seals M-12458 and 12458. A second seal in the Hermitage (M-7962) of great similarity of content is likely also to have been found on the north Black Sea. Ibid, 87-8. Zavagno (2009), 147. TIB 9, 162. The role of *kommerkiarioi* will be further considered below, pp. 218-9.
[221] TIB 9, 162. Zavagno (2009), 147.
[222] VGA 16 & 21.
[223] VGA 23.
[224] VGA 24.

them to acquire taxable property.[225] Capital taxes were introduced and Theophanes reported the reforms as, essentially, a tax on enterprise.[226]

The number of orphans (possibly by reason of shipwreck) was a social problem of specific mention, along with theft, robbery and homicide.[227] The Life assures the reader these were addressed and resolved. Imperial taxes and other impositions were relieved because of the close relationship said to exist between Amastris and the imperial family.[228]

2.3. The city under attack

The Life refers to devastating attacks at the hands of two groups, the Arabs and the Rus'.

The attack by the Arabs is described as the severest in memory.[229] This might be an exaggeration to bolster the image of the saint but it may equally be a reference to raids actually suffered by the region, if not by the city itself.[230] The raids caused many refugees to crowd to the city from the surrounding countryside and they, together with the citizens of the city, sought refuge within the city's defences. The saint is recorded as gathering all together safely in the city "as if in a pen".[231] This is a neat description

[225] Theo. 486-487; Mango & Scott (1997), 667-8.
[226] That is, as opposed to income related taxes. Many of the specific provisions related to inherited and accumulated wealth (i.e. not trading profit). Theo. 486-488; Mango & Scott (1997), 667-9. The reforms of Nikephoros were unfair only to the extent that they now applied equally to all groups and loop holes for tax evasion on the part of the church, the rich and government officials had been closed. The reforms were continued by his successors. Geanakoplos (1984), 61.
[227] VGA 23, 24 & 33.
[228] VGA 21, 34 & 35.
[229] VGA 24.
[230] See further on this pp. 76-9.
[231] VGA 25.

of a retreat behind encompassing walls. They were of such size and strength to withstand attacks and preserve the city from sack. There is no mention of a garrison.

Withdrawal behind a well fortified stronghold was an established tactic for dealing with Arab raids during the eighth century. In 779 Amorion was besieged for a day but the Arabs withdrew. They attacked the region again in 796, taking prisoners from surrounding countryside (as they were described as doing in Amastris)[232], but not laying siege to the city itself.[233] In 778 a deliberate decision was made not to meet Arab forces in the field but to withdraw into the fortress. The reason for the tactic is made clear. The Arabs could not be provisioned, ran out of supplies and had perforce to withdraw.[234]

The attacks by the Rus' form the subject matter of posthumous miracles. The Rus' are described as proceeding along the coast coming from the Propontis and then spreading up the coast as far as Amastris.[235] If this reported raid was part of the original composition and not a later interpolation then it took place in the first half of the ninth century between 814 and 843, the period of the second wave of Iconoclasm and probably prior to 839 when a delegation of Rus' were at the court of Theophilos then possibly seeking to negotiate terms of peace as a result of this and other raiding.[236] This is some twenty years at least before the first recorded attack on

[232] VGA 24.
[233] Theo, 452 & 470; Mango & Scott (1997), 624 & 646.
[234] Theo. 452.
[235] VGA 43.
[236] *Ann. Bert*, 839, p. 30-1; trans Nelson (1991), p. 44. Zuckerman argues that the presence of Rus' at the court of Theophilos was an attempt at negotiating terms of peace after the raids of which the Amastris episode was one. Zuckerman (2000), 101f. In this he follows Franklin and Shepard (1996), 31.

Constantinople.[237] The raid records general destruction and specifically to the churches. There is again no mention of a garrison; indeed it is recorded that not only was there no aid provided but there was no resistance in any other way.[238] This statement may again be a topos revealing the power of the saint but it may also be suggestive that the city was not yet the main port of a newly formed theme of Paphlagonia with a permanent military presence.

2.4. Increased ecclesiastical importance

We have seen that the star of Amastris was already on the rise by the eighth century. Friction between Amastris and the metropolitan see of Gangra, to which it was subject, had clearly arisen.[239] There are allegations that, in Amastris, ecclesiastical governance is not adequate and that the liturgy is in disorder.[240] It is conceivable that

[237] On 18th June 860 and described in graphic detail by Photios, *Homilies*, III and IV. Whether these posthumous miracles are part of the original composition and not a late ninth-century interpolation is not wholly free of doubt notwithstanding the very persuasive arguments of Ševčenko that they are all of a piece with the rest of the Life ("of the same cloth"), a composition of Ignatios the Deacon, a "reluctant iconoclast" before 843. Ševčenko (1977), 113-131. Contrary views are held contending the entry, as an interpolation, related to a raid of 860 or 941. TIB 9, 162-3. Treadgold persuasively argues that the creation of the new Black Sea themes of Paphlagonia, Chaldia and the Klimata (Crimea), the first two of which he argues were created in 820 by Leo V, were to deal with an obvious, novel, seaborne threat, the Rus'. Treadgold (1988), 223. Franklin and Shepard, whilst acknowledging the absence of certainty in the matter, do not contend that a pre-842 raid was impossible. The 838 embassy referred to in the Annals of St. Bertin could have been an attempt to repair relations with Byzantium following such a raid. Furthermore the disparate nature of the various groups of Rus' meant, as they point out, that one might undertake a raid that the others had no part to play in. Franklin and Shepard (1996), 31. Those who cannot countenance a raid on Amastris before the 860 raid on Constantinople appear to disregard the possibility of raiding by the Volga Rus' approaching from the west of the Black Sea.The administrative changes to the Black Sea themes and the separate record of embassies of Rus' to the Byzantine court in the 830s supports the argument that the VGA raid was, indeed, pre-842, indeed pre-838. Markopoulos sees the style of Photios in the posthumous miracles however and considers them to have been a post-860 interpolation to link the event, or the fear of them, to the 860 raid on the capital and the subsequent diplomatic skills of the Byzantines over the peoples of the Black Sea. Markopoulos (1979), 80-2. Zavagno suggests that the account might not have described a real raid but reflected the fear of one and that such fears could have developed between 843 and 860 as the presence and proclivities of the Rus' became more known. Zavagno (2009) 137-8 and n. 123. He is persuaded that the miracle more likely than not refers to the Rus' raids of which the 860 attack on the capital was part, and the national disquiet that must have generated. Ibid, 138

[238] VGA 43.

[239] VGA 21.

[240] VGA 21 & 23.

the growing seaborne trade was by then enhancing Amastris at the expense of Gangra, the former attracting greater population, traffic and wealth as well as the social and other problems already referred to and which required significant pastoral attention.

Amastris became ecclesiastically independent of Gangra. When this occurred is uncertain. The Life refers to the assistance of an emperor who could have been either Constantine VI (780 -797) or Nikephoros I (802-811). It seems George was ordained a priest shortly after the elevation of Tarasios to the patriarchate in 784 and thereafter returned to Amastris. The author of the Life acknowledges that his reporting of the saint's promotion to the archbishopric was out of chronological order.[241]

Notitia 3 of the ecclesiastical lists of the patriarchate of Constantinople refers to Amastris as a simple bishopric.[242] The date of *Notitia* 3 has been the subject of debate. Its dependence on attendance lists of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787 provides a *terminus post quem*. Recent scholarship argues convincingly for an end date of 805.[243] The Life records the extraordinary closeness between the saint and Nikephoros I to whom the former was both spiritual advisor and general confidante.[244] That emperor is likely, by reason of that relationship, to have provided the "assistance" referred to. The mention of imperial assistance in the saint's ordination and elevation is, again, a pointer to the growing recognition on the part of the capital of the importance of the city to Black Sea interests.[245]

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[241] VGA 22.
[242] Darrouzès *Not.* No. 3.
[243] Zuckerman (2006), 201-230, 204-207.
[244] VGA 35.
[245] In *Not.* No 7 Amastris is shown as no longer subject to Gangra and in *Not.* No. 8 (datable 920-980) it is shown as autocephalous. Darrouzès, *Not*.7 (1.79) (p 273) and *Not*. 8 (1.56) (p 292). The date of *Not*. 7 has recently been argued to be no earlier than 920. Zuckerman (2006), 219-226. See also Brandes (1989), 138 (autocephalous after 800).

2.5. Increased strategic importance

The importance of Amastris in startegic terms is revealed by a reorganisation of theme structure, perhaps occurring within a couple of years of the composition of the Life. Three new themes were carved out of the former Armeniac theme (which remained as a province under that name with a capital at Amaseia). The new provinces were Paphlagonia and Chaldia (with its capital Trebizond) and, inland, Charsianum. The border line of Paphlagonia did not include the port of Sinope (which it did as a *turma* of the former Armeniac theme) which remained in the Armeniac theme.[246] Amastris thus must have become the primary port of the newly formed province and the place where the theme fleet was based under the command of a *katepano*.[247] In any event Paphlagonia is an attested theme by 826.[248]

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[246] To the west the major harbours of Tios and Herakleia remained in the Bukellarion theme. TIB 9, 276 and 209.

[247] A tenth-century seal seems to contain a possible refernce to a *katepano* of Amastris but the designation is not without doubt; it could refer to Amaseia. Ahrweiler (1966), 111. TIB 9, 162. In any event the *DAI* refers to a *katepano* of Paphlagonia having control of the theme fleet. *DAI* 42/ 31. Within the borders of Paphlagonia the seat of that official could only have been Amastris, being the only port on the coast of suitable capacity and, of course, having the benefit of the substantial defensive structures more fully considered below, pp. 69-89. TIB 9, 162. Ahrweiler distinguished, for the pre-Macedonian era, two types of fleets stationed in themes, one armed and equipped by the theme and under the command of the *strategos*, and another designated by the name of the theme where it was stationed but armed by and under direct authority of Constantinople commanded by a *turmarch* or *drongarios.* Ahrweiler (1966), 90. The description given in the *DAI* of the *katepano* fits the second class neatly. The section clearly suggests the emperor commanding the *katepano* directly to accompany Petronas without reference to the *stategos*. *DAI* 42/ 30-2. From the seventh or eighth centuries Amastris might have served as a docking station for the imperial fleet taking advantage of the defences and following the re-formation of Byzantine naval forces into imperial, provincial and theme formations. Ahrweiler (1966), 31-4. TIB 9, 161. That role may well have continued after the theme re-organisation of the early ninth century as seems to be suggested by Zavagno (2009), 144. I am not convinced that Amastris was a port where one or more wings of the imperial fleet (as opposed to the theme fleets) also docked. There are reasons to question whether Amastris had that enhanced role notwithstanding the scale of its fortifications. From a practical point of view the western harbour is relatively small. It is difficult to envisage it as accommodating two significant fleets. There is a more commodious harbour at Sinope. Furthermore Amastris was not too far distant in sailing terms from the capital. It is to be noted that the bases listed in the sources were spaced evenly around the Black Sea with Amastris probably covered by the fleet in the capital. That such was the case seems confirmed by the entry in the *DAI*. Petronas is sent from the capital with the imperial fleet and joins forces with the provincial fleet without mention of docking at Amastris or anywhere else prior to Cherson. Indeed the two fleets might well have crossed the Black Sea to Cherson independently. See further above p. 213 n. 765.

In his treatise on the themes Constantine VII noted that the second most important city of Paphlagonia was Amastris.[249] After 838 and the last serious Arab incursion,[250] the empire's attention turned heavily to the Black Sea because of the Rus' and the *strategos* might have spent as much time in Amastris as Gangra (although there is no evidence of this).[251] Alternatively, as recently posited by Zavagno, Pahlagonia may have been split administratively between its coastal zone and the interior, reflecting a like geographical division, with the *katepano* bearing primary responsibility separate from the *strategos* for the former, and with some degree of autonomy.[252] Certainly a reading of the DAI suggests the *katepano* received his instructions to join forces with Petronas directly from the capital and not through the *strategos*.[253] Furthermore the discovery of a seal of the first half of the tenth century suggests that the *katepano* may have exercised, for a while, joint authority for both Paphlagonia and the neighbouring Boukellarion theme.[254] That points to a high level of cross border command independent of the respective theme *strategoi*.

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[248] Oikonomidès (1972), 353. It has been argued with some justification that the theme was created just before 820, during the iconoclasm of Leo V, because of a strong description in the Life of Theodore the Studite. Treadgold (1989), 132-144, 139-141.
[249] *De Thematibus*, 15-20.
[250] Treadgold (1988), 339.
[251] It is possible that the *strategos* of the theme may have had a seat in the city as well as the provincial capital. That the *strategos* maintained seats in major cities of a theme is revealed in the VGA. The *strategos* of the Armeniac theme clearly had a seat in Trebizond where he, amongst other things, exercised judicial authority and had a family home. See VGA 29 (deciding the case against the Amastris traders) and VGA 30 (the presence of the wife of the strategos). As VGA 34 indicates, the stories of the arrested traders took place in the reign of Eirene (797-802) when both Amastris and Trebizond were in the Armeniac theme. That the author was writing after subdivision is suggested by the reference to Trebizond being in "another land" than the one in which Amastris was; VGA 27.
[252] See above n.247. Ahrweiler (1966), 73. Ahrweiler identifies the *katepano* as a regional name for an archon, a Byzantine functionary in provincial service and having a diversity of responsibilities and thus leading it seems to a number of names for closely related officials, *prokathemenos*, *kephale* and *katepano* among them, ibid, 57. Regional archons for strategic maritime zones seem to have been responsible for the seas and not the land and were under direct authority of the capital. Ibid, 73. It is not certain that Amastris was one such zone but circumstantial evidence including the *DAI* strongly suggests it. See also Zavagno (2009), 148-9.
[253] *DAI* 42/ 30-3
[254] Ibid, 148. TIB 9, 162. That seeming independant authority wielded by the *katepano* led it to be, at one time, argued that it was the peculiarly Paphlagonian term for the *strategos*. Brooks (1901), 67-77, 71.

The situation, therefore, by the 820s is that, in Amastris, there was a city of regional importance, harbouring a theme fleet and forming part of a chain of defences around the Black Sea completed, in about 838 – 9 by the creation of the theme of the Klimata in the Crimean peninsula, to marshal defence and resistance where it had hitherto been singularly lacking. Furthermore the city had grown in importance in trading links across and around the Black Sea and its growing importance was reflected in a concomitant increase in ecclesiastical stature and influence.

3. The medieval monuments of Amastris

3.1. The Walls[255]

3.1.1. General description and layout

The walls enclose the extreme northern promontory of the peninsula which arises 30 m above sea level and above that of the modern town (fig 4). They, together with the precipitate cliffs on the northern coastal side, create a well protected bastion. Fortifications extend to encompass the island of Boz Tepe that rises to 70 m above sea level and it, likewise, has natural defences in its cliffs.[256]

[255] The Byzantine walls have been intensively studied in recent years and the published accounts and associated conclusions continue to provide a firm framework for discussions about Amastris in the middle Byzantine period. Of particular relevance are Crow and Hill (1990), Crow and Hill (1992), Crow and Hill (1995), Hill and Waddington (1994), and Hill (1991b). The walls have also been recently discussed in Zavagno (2009) where he has, in the process, reviewed the scholarship and compared them to seventh and eighth century defensive works in Anatolia (Amorion) and elsewhere on the Black Sea (Cherson). The following descriptions, observations (except where otherwise acknowledged) and associated figures were gathered as a result of a week's visit to the town and locality in August 2002.

[256] The marriage of walls and topography is graphically illustrated in a 19th century engraving in Hommaire de Hell (1859), Plate 20.

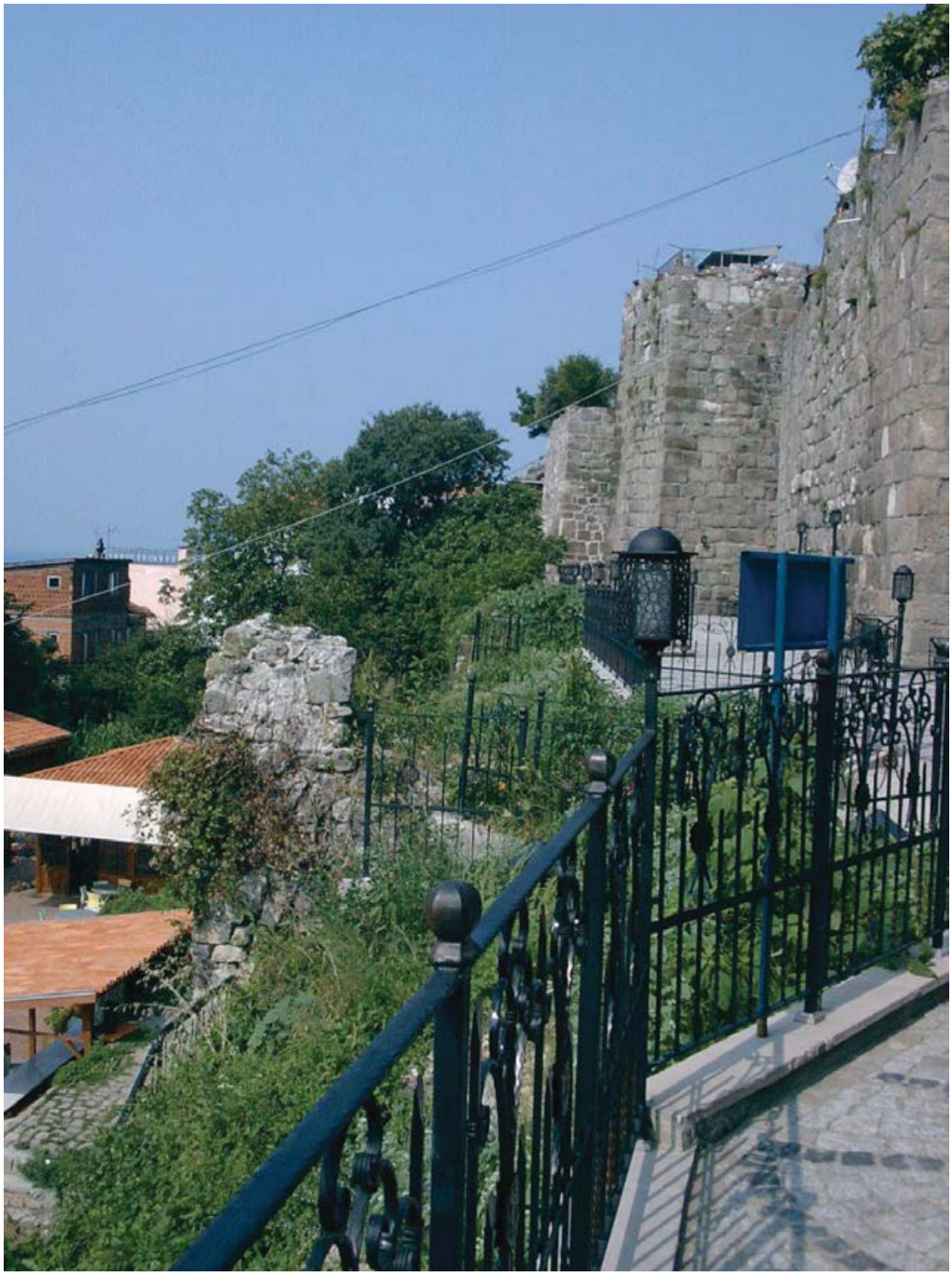
The walls present a variety of forms and masonry types.

The most impressive are the sections stretching from between the east and west harbours and closing off the fortress and the landward approaches. Here there are two lines of wall. Of them, the inner land walls are the most dramatic (fig. 7). They rise to a height of about 9m and are strengthened by a series of rectangular towers spaced irregularly along its length. At the west gate end the walls, strengthened by massive buttresses, descend to the level of the shore where, on a spit of land, there is a Byzantine lighthouse (fig. 8).[257] At the east gate a curtain wall with towers follows the contour of the promontory round to the north east shore and then, without towers, along the shoreline. Further stretches of wall are built to enhance the natural barriers created by the cliffs. Heavily buttressed walls also defend the southern bank of Boz Tepe. The main walls are about 2m thick and comprise (where there is coursed work) a rubble and mortar core between stone facings (figs 9 and 10). The towers project between 4m and 6m from the curtain walls.

Access through the walls on the landward side is through two gateways respectively at the east and west extremities. Both are set at right angles to the walls and each comprises an inner and outer gate. The configuration is clearly to make access difficult for an attacker from the landward side. Such an attacker, whichever way he approached the citadel, would have to run a gauntlet through enfilading fire from the walls as well as being forced into a cramped space between the inner and outer gates. A third gate protects Boz Tepe, the approach to which is over a narrow bridge and

[257] The surviving structure was, it seems, part of a sequence of lighthouse towers and docking facilities in the west harbour. Hill (1994), 6.

Figure 7



Amastris. Inner and outer city walls.

Figure 8

Amastris. Lighthouse and associated building.

Figure 9,

Amastris. Walls; facings and core.

Figure 10.

Amastris. Walls; core detail.

then through a narrow barrel vaulted tunnel. The southern section of the gate was fitted with a barbican.[258]

At various points there is clear evidence of building by the Genoese who controlled Amastris in the late thirteenth century when it formed part of its group of trading centres around the Black Sea. Sculptured escutcheons were placed in Tower C,[259] on the walls at the east end, above the east gate, and a majestic set are found in a fronton above the lintel of the gateway adjacent to the northwest corner of an inner citadel, the İç Kale. There is a further one on Tower G, below a Byzantine inscription with a cross.[260] The machicolation above the west gate is also a late medieval feature.[261] These elements form a *terminus ante quem* for the walls of the mid fifteenth century.[262] Ottoman additions to the general masonry are likely to be present although it is difficult to distinguish between Ottoman and late Byzantine work.[263]

3.1.2. Identifiable phases and sequencing

There are clear phases in the construction of the walls and associated structures. They follow sequentially upon each other. The lowest region, and thus the earliest phase, is represented by the use of large ashlar blocks, both plain and rusticated, laid in courses

[258] Crow and Hill note that this arrangement distinguished the city from most other Byzantine fortifications and is to be found frequently in middle Byzantine castles. The layout points to a period when security and defence issues outweighed those of display. Crow and Hill (1995), 262-4.
[259] The reference here, and below, to "Tower" is a reference to the towers identified by letter in fig.4 .
[260] Crow and Hill (1995), 259.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Foss found that, in analysing the walls of Nikomedia, it was difficult to distinguish Byzantine from Ottoman work purely on style. Low quality of masonry does not necessarily predicate Ottoman work. At Nikomedia the Ottoman work was far superior to the Byzantine. Foss (1996), 39 and n.4.

with only modest amounts of mortar.[264] The topmost regions are characterised by very mixed uncoursed material of brick fragments and small random stone. Crow and Hill also identified phases in the construction of the walls signposted, as well as by masonry style, by bonding (or the absence of it) between towers and curtain walls and mortar differences. With regard to the mortar[265] they found that early work was characterised by a coarse aggregate in hydraulic mortar and late work bonded by lime mortar and finer aggregate. They identified the mortar of the topmost registers as hard white, characteristic of Genoese construction.[266]

Between these two types are two other identifiable phases. One is characterised by the use of roughly squared stone, smaller than that used in the earliest phase, laid mainly to courses and, in places, incorporating *spolia* as decorative elements and a liberal use of mortar. Examples are the façade of Tower G and the southern gate to Boz Tepe (figs 11, 12 & 13).The other is identifiable through the increased use of brick in arches and as levelling courses. These two phases represent work done to the walls between their original construction and the Genoese period (referred to below as "intermediate phases" A and B).[267]

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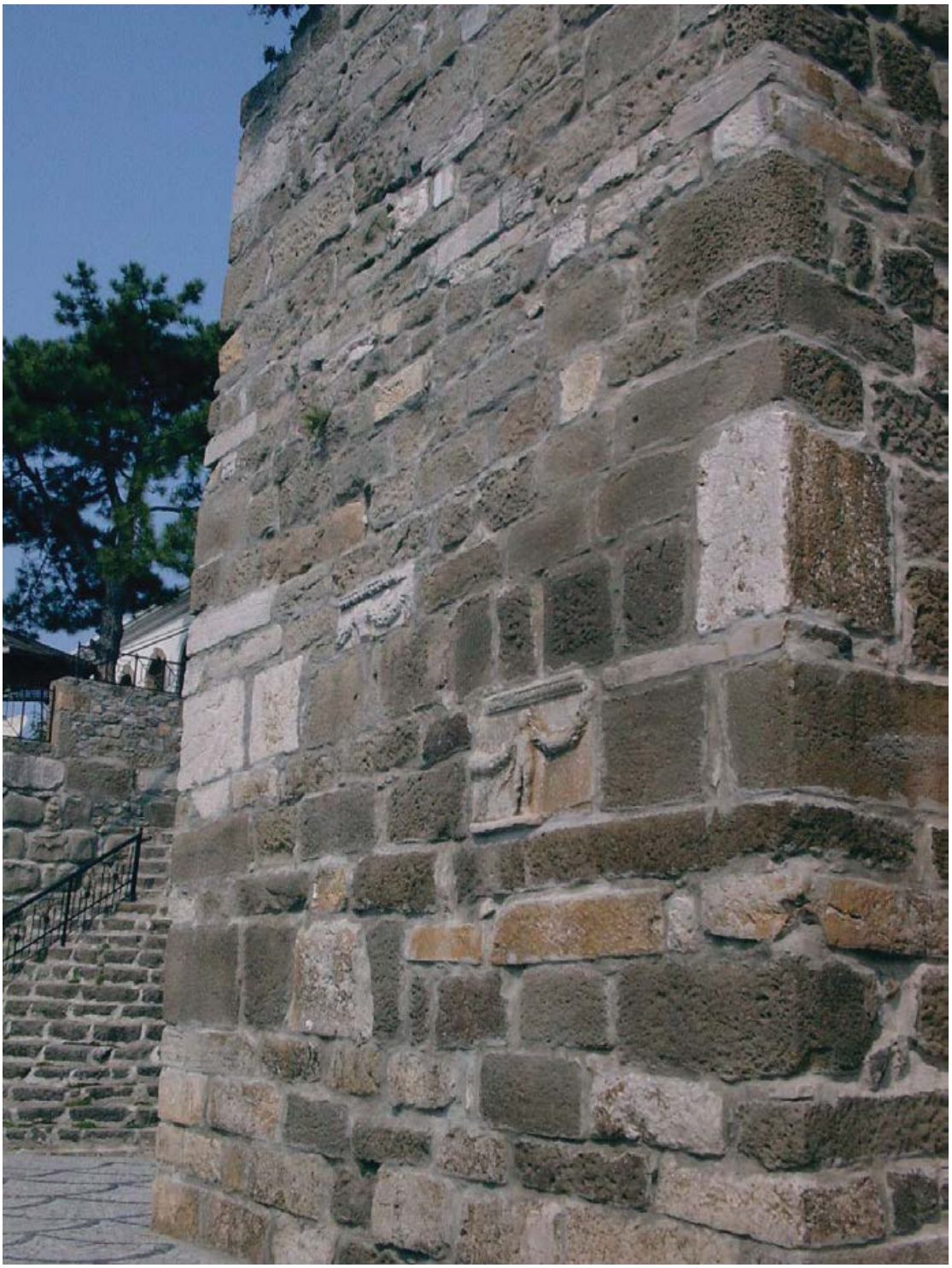
[264] It cannot be shown with certainty that the line of the main walls followed any fortifications from the classical era. The large blocks, where they reveal rustications and fine arrises characteristic of ashlar, point to an initial source of Roman or earlier periods. Different types (rusticated and plain) are mixed together, indicative of re-use. Mortar that binds them and the rubble core (hydraulic) is not of a type used by Roman builders. Adam (1994), 73.

[265] I was unable to examine this aspect because of recent renovations hiding such features.

[266] Crow and Hill (1995), 258.

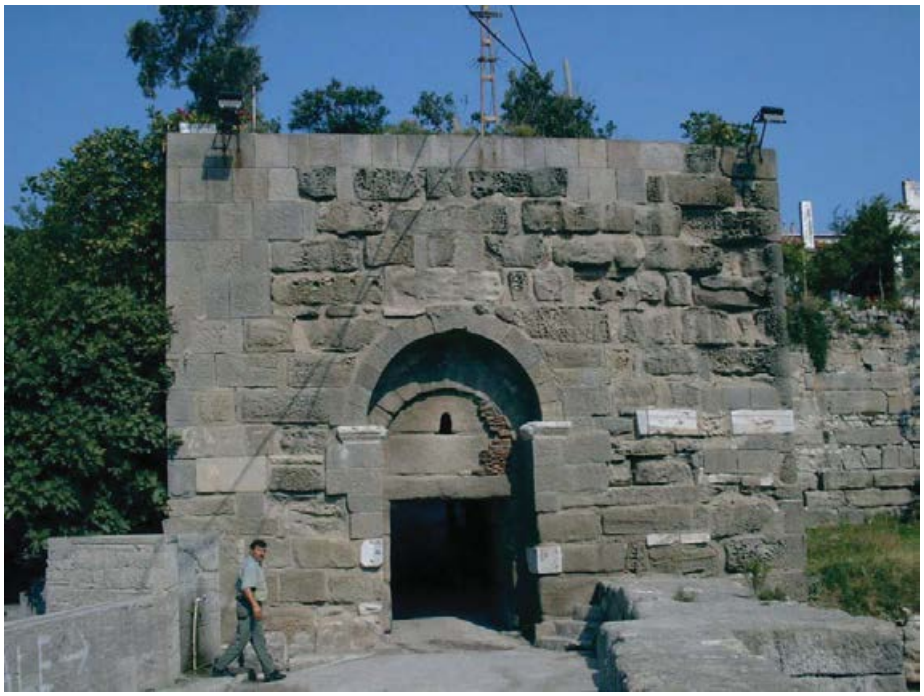
[267] The phases Crow and Hill identified were broadly four; large block work of coursed squared stone, coursed block work mixed with smaller squared stones and some brickwork, small blocks and brickwork and, finally, random rubble. The coursed work was further differentiated between that which carried deliberately inserted *spolia* as decorative elements and that where such features were absent. Crow and Hill (1995), 256-259. Zavagno, in his recent study appears to conflate the two coursed blockwork phases and then argues that the *spolia* insertions were "carefully cut out and set into the walls" in a manner characteristic of sixth-seventh-century Byzantine architecture. Zavagno (2009), 140. Crow and Hill assert an early eighth century date for the Boz Tepe barbican and Tower G having regard to the restoration work on the towers at Nikaia under Leo III (730) with which the "*spolia* phase" is comparable. Crow and Hill (1995), 257-8. See Schneider and Karnapp (1938) for detailed descriptions of the walls at Nikaia. They identify towers 70 and 72 and the curtain wall between them,

Figure 11.



Amastris. Tower G.

Figure 12.



Amastris. Boz Tepe south gate.

Figure 13.

Amastris. Boz Tepe south gate. Detail of *spolia*.

Intermediate phase B is characterised by the use of "traditional" *opus mixtum* comprising about seven courses of squared stone more or less laid to courses interspersed with three courses of brick. This form does not appear in the walls but it is the masonry style of the lighthouse (figs 8 & 14). To the east of this structure can be seen the foundations of an oblong five roomed building, the walls of which closely recall, in style and construction, block work laid roughly to courses with stone insertions and liberal amounts of mortar. The type of stone is similar to that in the lighthouse the difference only being that the stones of the lighthouse are smaller. Notwithstanding that, the two structures appear closely related both in construction and physical proximity.

Tower G is distinctive, not only because of the marble *spolia* (figs 15 and 16). There is also a distinct absence of bond between the walls of the tower and the curtain wall.[268] In this, together with mixed stone masonry (intermediate phase A) and decorative *spolia* it is similar to the barbican gate of Boz Tepe.[269] I also detect Intermediate phase A in the middle registers of walls near the east end wharf, of the İç Kale inner walls, the mid and upper sections of Towers A, D, E and F and the wall near the water line below the west inner gate. It is also to be seen in the tower at the east tip of the walls on Boz Tepe.

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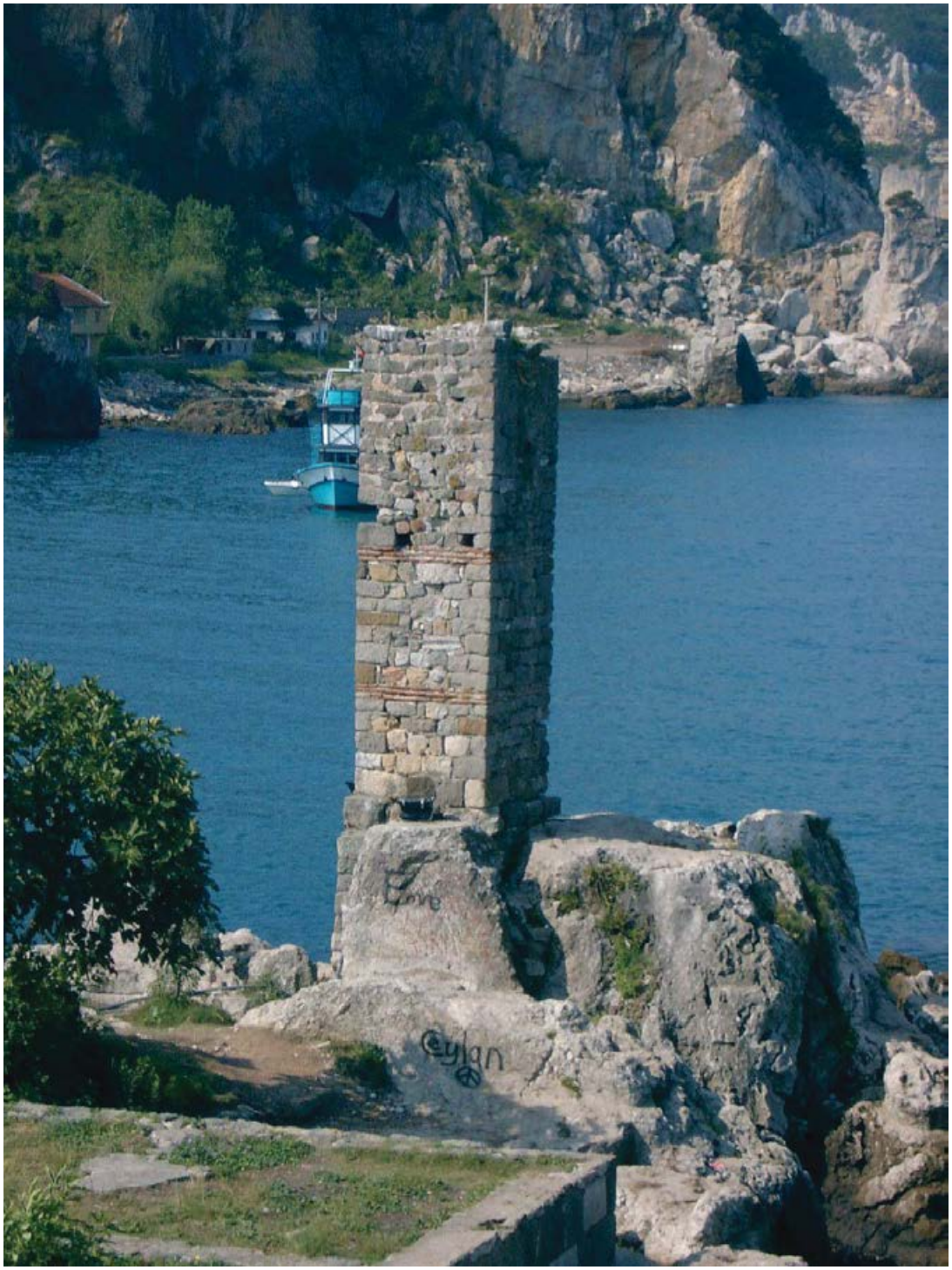
and tower 94, all of carefully laid blockwork spoil as work of Leo III and Constantine V. Ibid, 40. They are not recorded as containing decorative spoil and there seems a qualitative difference between the Nicaean walls and the somewhat rougher forms on the Boz Tepe gate and Tower G at Amastris. I am not convinced that there is necessarily a close stylistic comparison.

[268] Crow and Hill (1995), 257. Tower G is an "added tower" to the land walls. The absence of bond can be seen in fig. 16.

[269] Crow and Hill relate Tower G and the Boz Tepe gate together on the basis of the type of blockwork masonry involving inclusion of decorative *spolia*; ibid, 257-8.

Figure 14.



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Amastris. Lighthouse.

Figure 15.

Amastris. Tower G. Detail of *spolia*.

Figure 16.

Amastris. Tower G, *spolia* on west face.

Of particular relevance in the context of this study is a relationship that can be perceived between intermediate phases A and B. The west outer gate (fig. 17) is a significant pointer to this relationship. Here the lower eight courses of masonry employs roughly squared block work in courses redolent of phase A. Above the lintel, at the springing of the arch, the masonry zones give way to intermediate phase B up to the Genoese machicolation. With this phase is to be associated the wide brick arch.[270] Intermediate phase B immediately follows that of A.

3.1.3. The decorative elements

There are two types of display evident in the walls.

The façade of Tower G and the south face of the Boz Tepe gate both display decorative elements in the form of carved *spolia*. On the face of Tower G just above eye level are two panels, one on which (seven courses up) is a figure supported by garlands or festoons, and the second, two courses above that, is an ox head also between festoons (a *bucranium*) (fig. 11). Both items are fragments of an originally large architectural element. Motifs such as this were most often the subject matter of sculpted friezes on Roman Doric or Composite architraves.[271] The west face of the tower also contains two pieces of decorative marble, one of which appears to be a fragment of architrave and the other of an unidentifiable shape beneath an egg and dart and bead and reel border (fig. 16).

[270] Crow and Hill (1995), 258. The inner gate and adjacent walls (visible in fig 17) are typical of the earlier phases and the voussoir arch itself is comparable with those on Boz Tepe.
[271] Curl (1999), 106.

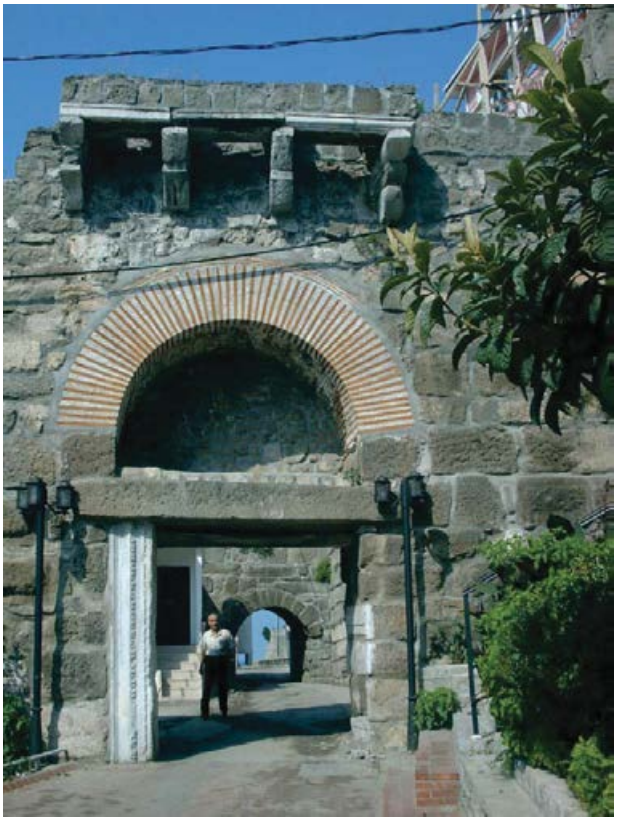
The south façade of the Boz Tepe gate has two marble blocks inserted level with the springing point of the arch (itself supported on antique impost blocks or fragments of cornice). One is a sculpted relief of an eagle but on its side. The other has an unidentifiable carving (fig. 13).

The west outer gate lintel is supported, on one side, by a large fragment of marble architrave or lintel with egg and dart and bead and reel ornament (fig. 17). A very similar fragment has been inserted against one of the jambs of the inner west gate filling a "rebate" between the piers of the inner and outer gates. It is difficult to understand why, on the basis of any structural necessity, these items have been introduced. They appear to have been inserted purely for decorative purposes but without regard to their original purpose, concern for presentation of sculpted motifs (it must have been obvious to the builder that the eagle on the Boz Tepe gate, representative of *imperium*, was not displayed at its best) or any regard to symmetry. In the case of the inner west gate the spoil is more or less hidden in the shadows.[272]

There is a second type of display in the walls, that of the cross. This motif is present in at least two locations. One is on a defaced Byzantine inscription.[273] The other is on the upper part of the curtain wall between Towers D and E (fig.18). The cross on the latter does not appear to be part of an early Christian assemblage. It is crudely executed without real depth compared to the fillet and incised line above it. These are crosses applied at a date later than the original carving and when the fragments are used for wall construction. They are placed high and beyond the reach of attackers.

[272] A further instance of spoil display is visible on the curtain wall to the west of Tower A where marble jambs and a lintel have been inserted. The space enclosed by them has been filled with masonry but it may represent the outer entrance from the İç Kale immediately to the north.
[273] Crow and Hill (1995), 259 and plate xxxviii b.

Figure 17.



Amastris. West outer gate.

Figure 18.

Amastris. Curtain wall between Towers D and E.

3.1.4. Dating

The first phases of construction utilise material from the antique city.[274] The walls were clearly originally erected to protect the city from a landward attack. The walls of Amastris have to be considered in the context of the city's historical development from then. There are two candidates for such aggression.

3.1.4.1 Persian raiding

Until the attacks by the Arabs the only threats to the Byzantine rule in Anatolia were from the Persians under Chosroes and it is uncertain as to whether they penetrated to the Black Sea coast. A detachment advanced across Asia Minor as far as Chalcedon[275] and Theophanes records them as taking Galicia and Paphlagonia on the way, ravaging as they went (607-608).[276] The Persians took Ankara in 619/620 and, after raising a fresh army, besieged Constantinople.

The Persians entered Anatolia through the Cilician Gates and other passes in the Anti-Taurus Mountains and, if we except the single mention of Paphlagonia, seem to have made a point of proceeding directly across the Anatolian plain to the capital. They had no naval capacity. In their sieges of Constantinople they relied on Avar ships.[277]

3.1.4.2 Arab raids

[274] Crow and Hill have uncovered evidence that the fortifications cut across parts of the late Roman city. Crow and Hill (1990), 12.
[275] *Chronicon Paschale*, 615, 159. Ostrogorsky (1940), 85
[276] Theo, 296; Mango & Scott (1997), 425.
[277] Theo, 316; Mango & Scott (1997), 447.

In 654/5 Arab forces attacked by sea across the Mediterranean but ravaging deep into Anatolia did not start until around 715 with an attack on Constantinople and the besieging of Amorion (which did not have a garrison or officers).[278] In 716/7 the capital was besieged by land and a significantly sized navy but it seems that the naval forces did not penetrate into the Black Sea.[279] Arab armies entered Anatolia through the Cilician Gates and advanced to Nikaia and Nikomedia.[280] Nikaia was attacked again in 726/7 and in 732/3 Theophanes reported that Arab forces had penetrated all the way to Paphlagonia.[281] An Arabic civil war provided a respite from Arabic attack until the late 750s. Between 756 and 807/8 Theophanes records sixteen raids into Anatolia but there is no hint of penetration by the land forces as far as the Black Sea coast. On the basis of Theophanes the only occasions when Amastris may have suffered in the eighth century appear to be in 732/3 and 737/8. There is some evidence that Gangra, at least, suffered on those occasions.[282]

The absence in Theophanes of a report of Arabs reaching the Black Sea or ravaging its immediate hinterland is, however, not necessarily conclusive. That there were routes to the Black Sea known to the Arab raiders is shown by the raids made in the ninth century by Emir Omar who reached Amisos (modern Samsun).[283]

Arab writing such as the tenth century *Hudud al-'Alam* based on, in part, earlier sources such as Ibn Khurdadhbih contained considerable detail of the administrative organisation as well as the garrison sizes of the Byzantine Empire. It has been said to

[278] Theo, 387; Mango & Scott (1997), 538.
[279] Theo, 391-398; Mango & Scott (1997), 542-6. The Arabs are recorded as penetrating by ship up the Bosporos as far as the Thracian shore but not beyond the environs of Constantinople.
[280] Theo, 397; Mango & Scott (1997), 546.
[281] Theo, 405 & 410; Mango & Scott (1997), 560 & 568.
[282] TIB 9, 196
[283] Whittow (1996), 311.

be "very much to the credit of the Arab intelligence service".[284] The data provided in the *Hudud al- 'Alam* mainly reflected the situation of the time of the Amorian dynasty (820 -867).[285] The entries were clearly summaries of far more detailed information in the possession of the Arabs. The statements are confidentially expressed, in particular the make up of each theme, both administratively and geographically. The large number of forts built is specifically recorded [286]. The source is well known for the statement that each city has a strong fortress "on account of the frequency of the raids that the fighters of faith direct upon them".[287] Other Arab sources of the same period indicate the detailed knowledge of, amongst other things, roads and routes in Anatolia and favourable times for raids.[288]

These statements accord with recent archaeological evidence. In Paphlagonia, fortified hill sites have been identified, all well built from dry stone with defined bastions and gateways. The lack of cultural material within them suggests they were places of refuge.[289] There are other towns not far from the coast in Paphlagonia that are protected by fortifications. Kastamon (modern Castamonu) has walls up to 50m high with rectangular projecting towers with large blockwork masonry. Pompeiopolis (modern Taskithru, barely 50km from the Black Sea and 150 km from Amastris, and encompassing within its territory the town of Amnia) is located close by a fortified hill with a single wall showing two phases of construction, the first in alternating brick and stone and reused classical *spolia*, and second random rubble used as repairs.

[284] *Hudúd al-'Álam*, Commentary 42, 420.
[285] Ibid, 7.
[286] Ibid, 157.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Brooks (1901), 67-77, 70.
[289] Matthews, Pollard and Ramag (1991), 195-206, 205.

It was equipped with rectangular towers.[290] This was clearly a place in which refuge was sought.

In (Pontic) Herakleia there are remains of rectangular towers with curtain walls and with a mixed masonry of large squared blocks and classical *spolia* (amongst which is a *bucranion*). It is uncertain when this tower was built and/or repaired but seals of the mid-eighth century reveal that the city was the base of an imperial *kommerkion* and (possibly) an imperial *spatharios* and *archon* in the ninth century.[291] It clearly had imperial attention from the eighth century and there is evidence that it also suffered from the depredations of the Rus'.[292]

This archaeological evidence strongly suggests the penetration of Arab raiders to regions close to the Black Sea of sufficient frequency to justify the building of fortresses including those at Amastris.[293] The utilitarian nature of the forms of fortifications generally found in Anatolia suggests, it has been argued, that they were erected by the locals for their own protection.[294] "Utilitarian" would not be an appropriate description of the Amastris walls.

3.1.4.3. Dating first phase construction

[290] Crow (1996), 19 – 23.
[291] TIB 9, 209, and plate 60. See also as to the Byzantine walls, Akkaya (1994), 54-75 and plates 53-58. The author dates much of what remains to the early thirteenth century particularly aided by an inscription (p. 55). It is by no means clear that the inscription must be taken to mean the whole of the walls were renewed at this (1206) time. TIB 9, 213.
[292] According to the *Vita Basilii junioris* I, 67 it was attacked as part of the Rus' raid on Constantinople in 941; TIB 9, 209. The *archon* whose seal was found may well have been an imperial official with particular responsibility for seaward and coastal defences with a degree of autonomy of action; a head of local naval policing protecting trade and providing security. If so it may reflect a development there in parallel with the appointment of the *katepano* at Amastris. Ahrweiler (1966), 57-61.
[293] There is no direct evidence of Arab penetration to the Black Sea and the terrain northwards of Gangra would have severely hindered any attempt at such penetration. Zavagno (2009), 136.
[294] Barnes and Whittow (1994), 200.

The explanation for the size and extent of the walls in Amastris must lie beyond protection of local communities.

The involvement of the administrator of Amastris in peace negotiations in 805/6 is, as already noted, a pointer to the importance then of the city in imperial considerations. It was not from Gangra or Sinope or other cities in the region that the negotiator was sent. There appears to be imperial awareness of the city that facilitated the funding of the walls perhaps generated by the administrator's efforts to promote the city's interests.[295]

The importance to the empire of Amastris by the end of the eighth century is supported by the VGA. Tarasios was an imperial secretary prior to becoming patriarch in 784 and he seems, at that time, to have been particularly concerned with the ecclesiastical governance of the city.[296] The reference to "an emperor" would have been to Constantine VI. The raid of the Arabs referred to in VGA 24 appears to predate VGA 21 (the ecclesiastical independence of the city from Gangra).[297] The walls, within which the saint gathered the people, are likely, therefore, to have been established by the end of the eighth century.

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[295] As the citizens of Amastris expected St. George to do and thereby achieve fame and glory for the city (VGA 16), and, indeed according to the Life, did achieve through a close association with the imperial court (VGA 21). The administrator sent on the peace mission, as Zavagno points out, was an *oikonomos*, an official who occupied a very senior position in the episcopal hierarchy. Zavagno (2009), 136, n.103. This seems to confirm that the church hierarchy were indeed active in the politics of the region and concerned with the status and influence of the city.

[296] VGA 18

[297] The author of the Life was mindful of a proper chronological order of events and makes it clear – e.g. at VGA 20 and 22 – where he has strayed from this pattern. It is a possibility, as Zavagno has pointed out, that the miracle was an invention. Nonetheless, as he rightly observes, it would at least reflect a real fear of such raids grounded upon experience and actual reports reaching the city from regions not too far distant. Zavagno (2009), 136, n.99. As to the reliability of the Life as a record of events it must be remembered that it was written at a time (839-842) when there would likely be people still living who would be in a position to recall, in part, the times and events in the narrative and a comparison with (say) the Life of Philaretos is misleading.

There is good reason, in fact, to date the initial construction to the period of Leo III (717 – 741) and his son Constantine V (741 -775).

Leo III was assiduous in having regard to the defence of the empire. It appears that, when he came to power in 716/7, it was arranged that the city's harbour in the Golden Horn be protected by a chain stretching from the city to the opposite shore at Galata.[298] He rebuilt the walls at Nikaia in 740/1 and raised taxes to pay for them.[299] Although the Chronicler ascribes the impetus for this work to destruction by earthquake, other places such as Nikomedia were similarly affected yet did not receive the same attention. Nikaia was, however, on the raiding route to Constantinople as it had been since the Persian attacks in the previous century. Leo was apparently protecting the capital.

There are entries in the Chronicle relating to Leo's efforts to raise revenue.[300] Constantine V by all accounts followed the same policy of building and raising revenue from churches and monasteries to do so.[301] He rebuilt the land walls of Constantinople as well as Hagia Irene. He is recorded as building fortresses in Thrace.[302]

[298] Theo, 396; Mango & Scott (1997), 545. This was the earliest mention of this device. Ibid, 548, n. 25.
[299] Theo, 412; Mango & Scott (1997), 572. See Schneider and Karnapp (1938), 49 for the text of the dedicatory inscription on the upper part of tower 69..
[300] Theo, 410 & 412; Mango & Scott (1997), 568 & 572.
[301] Theophanes accuses Constantine V of making monasteries "the common barracks for the soldiers who shared his opinions", heaping up treasure and making farmers bare by tax burdens; Theo, 443; Mango & Scott (1997), 611.
[302] There are two entries in Theophanes relating to this, one of 755/6 and another of 773/4; they may be a reference to the same fortresses.

The hostile polemic of Theophanes and other iconophiles hides much of what these two emperors accomplished.[303] As well as undertaking significant imperial building works, churches and fortifications and repairing basic infrastructure,[304] they were personally associated with the promulgation of the *Ekloge*, a legal code (with an explicitly stated aim to end bribery and corruption), convoking and presiding over councils (the Council at Hieria) and revealing themselves in triumphal processions.[305] Their reigns appear to have been both long and militarily successful. Trade (and the concomitant need to protect trade routes) would have been a vital ingredient of the process of raising revenues to add to other resources they were gathering.

Crow and Hill assert that fortresses should not be seen merely as defensive structures but also, on occasions, statements of status[306] to which must be added authority. The fortress building associated with Leo III and Constantine V reveals a concern with both security and the projection of authority. Crow and Hill note the stylistic parallel between the towers of the Byzantine fortifications and those flanking the Golden Gate at Constantinople.[307] The latter may have been an inspirational source for the Amastris work.

There is evidence, therefore, which points to the original construction of the major walls at Amastris as a product of the mid to the third quarter of the eighth century. The next phases of repair and rebuilding, as well as extensions, fall into some order in the context of the next stages of the history of the city.

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[303] Whittow (1996), 143.
[304] Brubaker and Haldon (2010).
[305] Whittow (1996), 143-144; Ostrogorsky (1940), 159-160.
[306] Crow and Hill (1995), 262.
[307] Ibid, 264. Although I am not convinced wholly of the stylistic associations proposed between certain aspects of the Amastris fortifications and the Nicaean works proposed by Crow and Hill. See above, p. 72 n. 267.

3.1.4.4. Subsequent events.

3.1.4.4.1. The Arab threat.

St George is said to be personally responsible for saving the city from a significant Arab attack on Amastris. This seems to have occurred in the reigns of either Constantine VI and/or Irene (780-802) since the occasion precedes the saint's journey to Constantinople in Irene's reign.[308] As with Ankara, Amorion and Nikaia, Amastris might also have suffered some damage at this time requiring repair. Theophanes records Nikephoros "rebuilding" Ankara in 804/5.[309] The building of additional towers at Amastris, including Tower G, and the south gate at Boz Tepe may well be the product of contemporaneous work of repair.[310] Such building work containing expressive *spolia* might further indicate the increased importance of the city reflected by the 805/6 involvement of its administrator referred to above.[311] The work appears to reflect enhancement rather than straightforward repair. Why might such enhancements be carried out?

The Arab threat continued until the 840s. There were raids into Anatolia in the 830s culminating in a two pronged invasion in 838, one arm of which (and this appeared to have been a novel tactic) proceeded northwards and invaded the Armeniac theme.[312] Persian troops in the Byzantine army rebelled at Sinope and declared their leader

[308] VGA, 34.
[309] Theo. 481.
[310] Crow and Hill relate the masonry of the Boz Tepe south gate and Tower G to the rebuilding of the towers at Nikaia by Leo III being directly comparable because of the use, in both places, of carefully chosen *spolia*. Crow and Hill (1995), 264. *Spolia* use is seen in repair work in the ninth century and cannot, by itself be a firm dating indicator. See further above p. 84.
[311] P.56.
[312] Treadgold (1988), 299.

emperor.[313] Sources have suggested that those rebels proceeded then along the Black Sea coast and took Amastris which Theophilos had to retake via a naval expedition.[314] As Treadgold has pointed out this could not have been the case since it was around this time that Petronas was being sent, via Amastris, to help build the fortress at Sarkel.[315]

I would argue that the decorative "*spolia* phase" of the Amastris fortifications is to be dated no earlier than the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth centuries. Crow and Hill, now followed by Zavagno, argue that this phase can be paralleled with the restoration work carried out in 730 to the towers at Nikaia which contained carefully chosen and placed *spolia*. They rightly make the point that there need not be large intervals of time between building phases.[316] The historical contexts for the two cities differ however and that factor puts an assertion of a mid-eighth-century dating for the Amastris phase in doubt. The mere presence of carefully chosen expressive *spolia* does not by itself provide a firm dating criterion. The presence of such material in the ninth-century rebuilt church of St. Anne, Trebizond shows that.[317] We have seen how frequently Nikaia was attacked and damaged during the eighth century. It was directly on the route taken by the Arab forces. There was need to repair Nikaia, and to announce that work as an act of imperial defiance by way of inscription.[318] The same did not apply at Amastris. There is no evidence, as we have seen, of Arab penetration to the Black Sea region until the end of the eighth century and the raid featured in theVGA. Thereafter Arab raids not only continued but there were altered

[313] Theo. Cont. III. 29, pp. 124-125.
[314] Theo. Cont. III. 29, p. 135. TIB 9, 75 and n. 137 there.
[315] See Treadgold (1988), 312-3 and 448-9, n. 434 for details of the source material and discussion.
[316] Crow and Hill (1995), 258, 264. Zavagno (2009), 142.
[317] See further, on this church, pp 99, 110.
[318] For the inscription see Schneider and Karnapp (1938), 49.

tactics which, it seems, did bring their forces deeply into northern Anatolia and with that a real fear that they would indeed break through into the Black Sea as reflected in some sources referred to above. It also is to be noted that there is an absence at Amastris of an imperial dedicatory inscription of the type adorning the Nikaia towers.

3.1.4.4.2. Rus' Raiding

By the third decade of the ninth century Paphlagonia had been created a theme with Amastris as its only port (and second city). It was then home to the theme fleet under the command of a *katepano*. Within a further twelve years a total of three new themes had been created focussed on the Black Sea. That significant strategic development probably followed very quickly upon the first appearance of a new destructive force, the Rus'.

The VGA refers to a raid of the Rus' that resulted in destruction (VGA 43).That raid, unless a differently authored later insertion, must have taken place before 843 (since the VGA is an iconoclast hagiography).There are, however, oddities about the entry. It is strange that the raid does not seem to come to the attention of the capital. When Constantinople suffers its own raid in 860 it is reported by Photios as coming out of the blue. It is doubly strange bearing in mind the Life is at pains to emphasise the closeness between Amastris and the capital. Furthermore in 839 Rus' are reported as being at Theophilos's court seeking friendly relations (presumably trading) with the empire and the emperor aids them in their return home.

The Amastris raid does not figure in the Russian Primary Chronicle (nor indeed does the delegation at Theophilos's court). One explanation for this may be that the raid was by another branch of the Rus' based at the mouth of the river Volga and who descended on the town from the west of the Black Sea.[319] This theory is supported indirectly by the fact that the two new themes of Paphlagonia and Chaldia were created to further strengthen defences along the southern Black Sea coast. This was not the established route of the Dnieper Rus'.[320] It is supported further by another piece of hagiography, the Slavonic Life of St Stephen of Sugdaia.[321] In that the raid (on the Crimean coast) is described as occurring "shortly after the saint's death", i.e. the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth. The reference to "Propontis" may refer to the Sea of Azov and the VGA refers to "Tauric" habits[322] a reference, perhaps to the region of Tauric Crimea.[323]

If the raid was not an interpolation (or invention)[324] it must have occurred before the establishment of the city as the main port of the new theme of Paphlagonia. If it had occurred afterwards there would have been a military presence in the city and therefore resistance to the raid. It is likely also that the raid would then have become properly reported in the capital.

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[319] Whittow (1996), 255-256.
[320] As detailed in *DAI* 9/5-100.
[321] There are three extant versions of the Life of St Stephen of Sougdaia, a short Greek one and a Slavonic and an Armenian version, the latter 2 sharing a number of similarities including some posthumous miracles involving the Rus'. The veracity of the Slavonic life as a source has been questioned having been composed much later than the events purportedly descibed; (see Brubaker and Haldon (2001), 227). The three lives are set out with translations, the Armenian in French and the others in English in Zuckerman (2006), 87-167. In a passage, at p. 161, with some remarkable parallels with the VGA the Rus' prince is prevented by the Saint from desecrating his church and accepts baptism. The Rus' are described as having raided the whole south Crimea coast from Cherson to Kerch.
[322] VGA 43; "…that ancient Tauric slaying of strangers…"
[323] Treadgold (1989), 136.
[324] See p. 65 n.237.

As to exactly when the raid occurred, in part this is dependant on when George died. There is some debate as to that. It has been generally assumed to have occurred towards the end of the first decade of the ninth century[325] but Mango and, independently, Ševčenko, argue that his death was at the end of the first quarter of the ninth century.[326] On the basis of that dating, a posthumous miracle referring to a Rus' raid in the 820s is more tenable, having regard to the presence of friendly Rus' at court in 839. The raid could then be viewed as one of the reasons (if not the primary one) why the theme was formed. The action of Theophilos in 839 forming the new theme of the Klimata in the Crimea immediately upon Petronas providing evidence of threats in the northern Black Sea indicates how quickly these strategic decisions were taken.[327]

3.1.4.5. Dating the intermediate phases.

As observed above (pp. 83-4) enhancement work involving the use of decorative *spolia* (intermediate A) may have been performed ca. 805/6. It is also surely reasonable to assume that the significant strategic steps of reformation of the theme structure ca. 820 would have been accompanied by appropriate imperial investment in defensive work in the major Black Sea ports and that this led, in Amastris, to the enhancements to the fortifications, represented by the intermediate phases, in particular the extending of the walls on Boz Tepe and the northern coast of the city, all of which are seaward facing works.[328]

[325] TIB 9, 162.
[326] Ševčenko (1977), 121, n. 59 which also refers to Mango's independent view.
[327] *DAI* 42/ 39-51.
[328] We shall see that defensive walls were substantially repaired and strengthened in Mesembria in the ninth century (pp. 132-5). Cherson was also supplied with substantial defensive walls that were repaired in the ninth century particularly at the southeast corner in the area identified as the middle

This permanent base for a fleet required a properly fitted out harbour and necessary protective measures. To such end one may reasonably deduce that lighthouses would have been an early necessity to guide entry of important shipping into the west harbour. The entrance to that is barely 130m wide and is narrowed further by sunken rocks fringing its northern and southern shores. As well as creating a natural defendable haven there are also significant risks on navigation.[329] That harbour would also have been preferred because the swell raised by easterly winds, frequent during summer months, does not enter this cove.[330] The natural defences were enhanced by placing a chain across the entrance. Elements to hold such a chain have been detected.[331] This is reminiscent of the novel expedient adopted by Leo III in 716/717 against Arab attacks on the capital. This defensive element is, again, focused seawards.

As has already been seen the stonework of the lighthouse and the adjacent buildings bear comparison, as they do with Tower G and the outer west gate, and are of a later phase of building quite distinguishable from the earliest phase blockwork by the use of smaller mixed stone. Furthermore, in the lighthouse, one can see that the intermediate phase involving the use of brick to create *opus mixtum* courses is closely allied, if not completely contemporary, with intermediate phase A (figs 8 and 14).[332]

Byzantine citadel. A new postern gate was erected over the antique area gate giving access to the citadel. Other sections of the walls around the whole site have a very middle Byzantine feel about them being composed of roughly squared mixed stone similar to that to be seen at both Amastris and Mesembria. Romanchuk (2000), 51-53 and figs 3-7. The exact dates of those works cannot be accurately determined, however.

[329] Black Sea Pilot, 428. Zavagno reaches the same conclusion noting that the walls of Boz Tepe and its defended bridge dominate the west harbour. Zavagno (2009), 142.

[330] Black Sea Pilot, 429. It remains preferred to the larger east harbour, to this day, as an anchorage for small craft for that reason.

[331] Hill (1994), 6. Crow and Hill (1995), 256.

[332] *Opus mixtum* work is a regular feature of Byzantine masonry and can be found in almost all periods of Byzantine history. Although variations of the form appear (numbers of brick and stone courses

As integral parts of the theme defences, the lighthouse and associated structure (as representative of intermediate B) can probably be dated to the 820s or after.[333] It is known that Theophilos had concerned himself with defensive building as witness the sea walls at Constantinople which bear many dedicatory inscriptions. The masonry there is of roughly squared mixed blockwork with some *spolia*, and roughly coursed. It is very reminiscent of some of the masonry in the lighthouse at Amastris.

With this dateable sequence as a background it is now necessary to consider the two churches constructed within the walls.

3.2. The churches

There are two churches constructed within the fortress walls.[334] Their original dedications are unknown. They are now known by their Turkish names, the Fatih Camii (FC) and the Kilise Mescidi (KM) (figs.3 (g) and (h)).

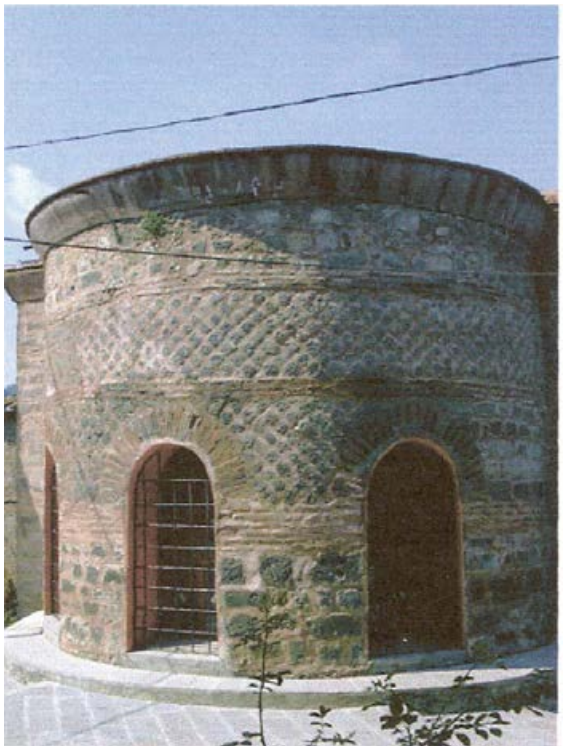
The churches occupy opposite ends of the fortified zone, each at points where the hill of the fortress rises to its maximum height. The floor levels, therefore, of both churches are partly submerged below ground level. At FC the west entrance rises to the full height of the building whilst only half of its apse is visible from the outside (fig.19). At the opposite end of the fortress, approaching KM from the west, one is

differ) there are no patterns that can be ascribed to a particular period with certainty. Ousterhout (1999), 169-172.

[333] Zavagno records that Prof. Ivison considers that the *opus mixtum* masonry of the lighthouse points to a ninth century dating. Zavagno (2009), 142, n.188.

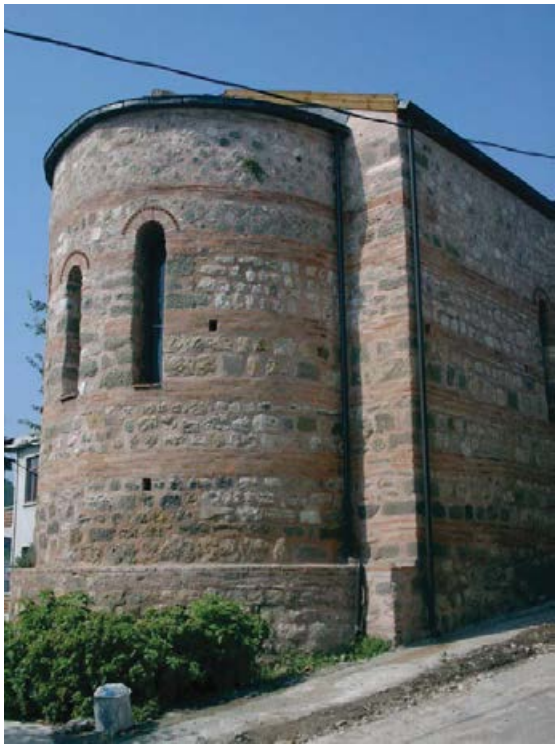
[334] The Byzantine city seemed to have been well endowed with churches. Hill has recorded evidence of no fewer than eleven of them. Hill (1991), 21.

Figure 19.



Amastris. Fatih Camii. Apse.

Figure 20.



Amastris. Kilise Mescidi. Apse.

met by the apse of the church rising impressively to its full height, of around 7m-8m (fig. 20).

Their alignments differ. FC is oriented east whilst KM is on a northwest - southeast axis seemingly following the contour of the hill at that point. Beyond that the two structures have many details in common. They are both laid out on identical foundation forms, a long single nave with a single fully semi-circular apse appended. Both have their apses pierced with three windows. All apertures in both churches are crowned with brick heads (figs 19 and 20). The masonry on both is generally of alternating stone and brick courses and both have received decorative facings in their upper registers with blocks in *opus reticulatum* patterns. In both decorative carved *spolia* has been incorporated.

There can be little doubt that both structures were built, or rebuilt, at much the same time by a single building team. Notwithstanding that, the foundations are not laid to identical proportions; indeed it is difficult to discern any proportionality in the foundation plan of either structure other than that the internal width of KM is about half of its total length (including the apse) and a similar relationship applies to the external width and length of FC.[335].

3.2.1. Fatih Camii

This is the larger of the two structures, being almost twice the size of KM. It encloses a large space, indeed almost exactly the same area as the central nave of the Old

[335] This seems to be a simple demonstration that Byzantine builders were not overly concerned with strict proportionality in the setting out of their buildings being more concerned with creating a space appropriate to its intended purpose, subject to the limitations of the site

Metropolis in Mesembria (Fig 3 (f)), a sixth-century building.[336] It is significantly more than those of the centrally focused types being constructed after the start of the ninth century. It is likely this church formed the cathedral of the city and has been tentatively identified as having been dedicated to the Pammakaristos although this may not have been its original dedication.[337]

There is nothing obvious in the surviving construction and foundation layouts of either church that functioned as *diaconicon* and *prothesis* though Eyice identified a thinning in the wall of KM as possibly providing a niche for liturgical purposes.[338] Both churches might have been equipped with aisles and other partitioning devices in wood although there is no evidence that such was the case.

3.2.1.1. The general masonry

In terms of general masonry FC displays two main types, blockwork of mixed squared stone, part laid to courses and part not, and *opus mixtum* style alternating bands of stone and brick (fig. 21).

Recent restoration may have interfered or masked some original work. The west façade, as it currently stands, differs in appearance from when Eyice first examined the building in 1954. In particular colonnettes have been inserted as supports for the triple window on the first floor level (fig. 22).[339] In general it seems this has not affected other facades.

[336] See pp. 121-3, 129 for discussion on the dating of this structure.
[337] Crow and Hill (1990), 10
[338] Eyice (1954), 101 – 2.
[339] Ibid, plate xxxvii, no. 4.

Figure 21.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. Masonry; north wall from the west.

Figure 22.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. West façade.

The *opus mixtum* masonry has been consistently applied on all facades except in the lowest registers on the west face. The bands comprise three to five courses of stone and three to four of brick. Stone is laid in courses. Stones are not of uniform size but have been squared. There is much application of mortar. Large stones predominate in the lowest registers. The bands of stone are kept at uniform widths and this creates a neat and coherent pattern around the whole structure. The brick bands consistently form the springing zones for the aperture arches.

The *opus reticulatum* work is applied to the upper register of all facades save on the apse where there are two bands commencing at the springing of the brick arches of the apse windows. The topmost register of the apse is (as it was at the time Eyice examined it) of four courses of stone.

The masonry of the lowest registers of the north wall at the west end is of a mixture of large and small squared stone with little regard for courses (fig. 21). The mixture suggests an area of repair, although it may equally be that large stones were used as a base on a sloping site before levelling up with smaller stones.

3.2.1.2. Elements of display

The *opus reticulatum* seems to have been inspired by fine Roman work in this form on the Bedesten and it is quite possible that the blocks used on FC were in fact salvaged from that structure. They are of similar size (about 15cm square). Their insertion in the walls of FC is with large applications of mortar (fig. 23). The work is performed more crudely than that in the Bedesten. Except for the bands around the

Figure 23.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. Detail of apse *opus reticulatum*.

Figure 24.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. South wall at upper east.

apse which commence at the springing of the window arches, the work is inserted in the topmost registers (fig. 24). It is the overall effect which mattered rather than finesse.

There are two large pieces of *spolia* inserted for decorative purposes. Both are used as lintels, one over the main west door and the other over the eastern-most door on the north façade. Both fragments carry identical sculpted images, of *bucrania* between garlands together with individual rosettes (figs 25 & 26). They are remarkably similar (although not identical) to the *spolia* in that form in Tower G.[340]

The deeply carved medallion on the south wall appears to display an "iota" (figs 27 & 28). It can, however, be readily discerned that this originally was a cruciform shape, the cross arms having been carved away, presumably in Ottoman times when the building was converted to use as a mosque.[341] The removal of cross arms is observable in the parapet walls of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (fig 30). It was a commonplace approach by Muslims to de-Christianise emblems as witness the Arab coinage of 600-705 in its imitative phase.[342] There is little doubt this image was carved *in situ*. The block is of a piece with the masonry of the walls and is placed in the stone course next below the sill of a ground floor window, visible at eye level.

3.2.2 Kilise Mescidi

[340] Eyice was of the opinion that the preference in the town for this image is a reflection of a linkage with an Apis cult which was prevalent in Paphlagonia in antique times; Eyice (1954), 99.
[341] The representation of the cross with splayed termini is a commonplace in Byzantium for the eighth and ninth centuries. Examples from Cherson are seen on items as diverse as lids and a funeral stone; Chichurov (1991), items 77 & 82. A form almost identical has been seen by the author in a wall in a bath house in Bosra, Syria surprisingly not defaced (fig 29).
[342] Foss (2008), 41 & 65. Bisheh (2000), 173.

Figure 25.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. Lintel over west entrance.

Figure 26.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. North wall. Spoil lintel.

Figure 27.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. South façade.

Figure 28.

Amastris. Fatih Camii. Detail of medallion.

Figure 29.

Bosra, Syria.

Figure 30.

Constantinople. H.Sophia, parapet.

3.2.2.1 General masonry

The general form is, as with FC, *opus mixtum* comprising alternating bands of stone and brick, typically each comprising two to three courses of stone and three courses of brick (fig. 31).In general smaller stone is used here than in FC but the type is the same, as is the form, i.e. roughly squared and laid to courses with large applications of mortar. The band widths are consistently maintained and follow more or less in unbroken lines around the whole structure.

Unlike FC, KM is adorned with two bands of *opus reticulatum* facings and all its upper registers (including the apse).

3.2.2.2 External display

There are three elements of external display on KM.

The *opus reticulatum* was, as in FC, probably created in imitation of that in the Bedesten and using materials gathered from there. Again, as with FC, the application is lacking in finesse. The surface area on which the *opus reticulatum* is placed is greater than that at FC (two bands all around).

There is a very restrained use of spoil as decorative material. There is only one significant fragment and that is the marble lintel of the door of the west entrance. Here a fragment from an early Christian church (probably originally a lintel itself) has been reused but rotated such that the carved chrismon on it now faces downwards (fig. 32).

Figure31.

Amastris. Kilise Mescidi. North wall.

Figure 32.

Amastris. Kilise Mescidi. West entrance lintel.

The lintel over the north façade window is hardly decorative. There are marble insertions in the walls but not of any size as to be significant as display.

As with FC all apertures have brick heads. In KM, however, they are further enhanced by the insertion of delicate terracotta rosettes over the extrados of the arches (figs 34 & 37). They have been very neatly inserted. This is not a feature found anywhere else in Amastris and amounts to a significant enhancement to the external appearance of KM.

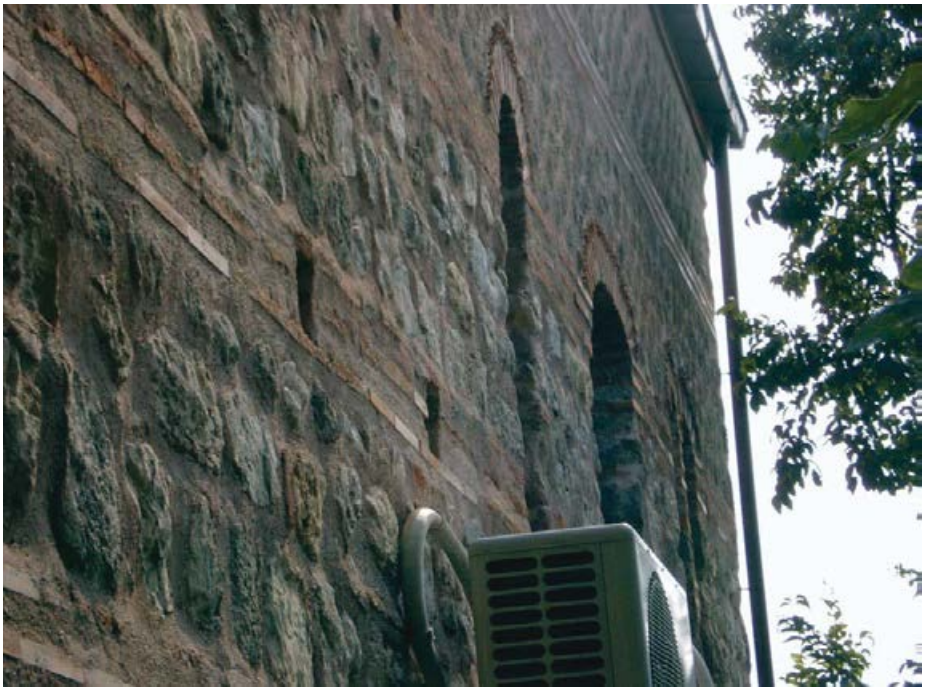
3.2.3 Dating of the churches

The two churches were examined and published by Eyice in 1954 but there has been no significant evaluation of them since then. Eyice dated the structures to no earlier than the second half of the ninth century and suggested they may even date as late as the thirteenth.[343] He considered they were built after destruction was wreaked upon Amastris by the Rus' in 860. Foundation design and layout was seen as primitive and rudimentary pointing, in his view, to builders with limited resources but nonetheless eager to follow the middle Byzantine trend for external appearance in façade presentation.[344]

Eyice's conclusions are open to some criticism. He must have assumed the Rus' miracle in the VGA to have been a late-ninth or tenth-century insertion into the Life and that any raid on the city could not have predated the one on Constantinople in

[343] Eyice (1954), 104
[344] Ruggieri (1991), 236 also dated them to the end of the ninth century on the basis of the presence of the *opus reticulatum* as external decoration and a restructuring of the west façade dateable, in his view, to that period.

Figure 33.



Amastris. Kilise Mescidi. South façade.

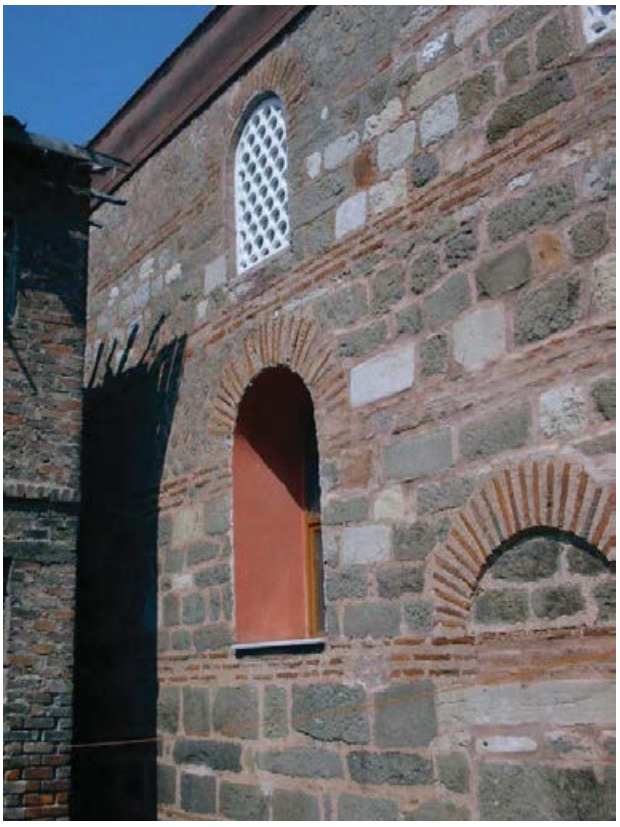
Figure 34.

Amastris. Kilise Mescidi. North façade sealed entrance.

Figure 35.

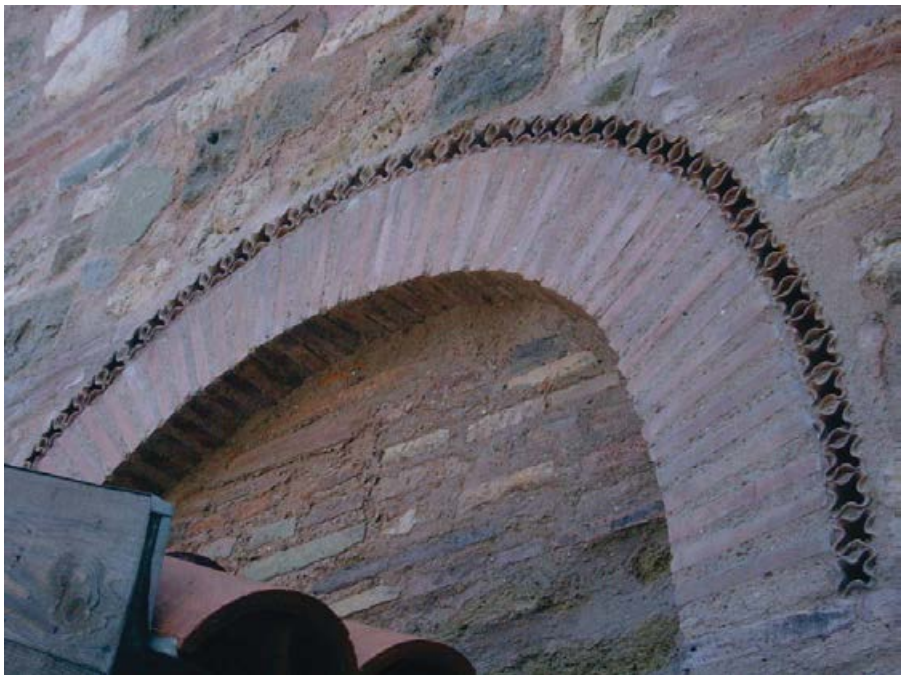
Amastris. Fatih Camii. South façade.

Figure 36.



Amastris. Fatih Camii. South façade looking west.

Figure 37.



Amastris. Kilise Mescidi. Arch over west door.

Figure 38.

Amastris. Walls; upper register.

860. As has already been noted there is much unresolved scholarly debate regarding this miracle from Ševčenko arguing for a pre-843 date to Markopoulos opting for a tenth century interpolation with a linkage to the 860 raid on the capital.[345] Even dated to ca. 860 the raid it describes may well represent one of the earliest reports of Rus' raids on Byzantine territory in this part of the Black Sea.[346] As to the "rudimentary" nature of the churches, simplicity of form cannot, by itself, be an indicator of lack of resources.

Crow and Hill noted a close relationship between the masonry and mortar of the churches and certain phases of the walls, all of which pointed to a date for the original construction of the churches to perhaps the seventh or eighth century but with the structures in their surviving form having been rebuilt perhaps more than once since then.[347]

The masonry of small squared blocks and the brick bands identify the churches, in their surviving forms, as products of the intermediate phases although the foundation plan suggests a much older, at base perhaps basilical, form. The absence of a tripartite bema seems to signpost a form conceived before that feature became a standard requirement for the performance of the liturgy, before the ninth century.[348]

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[345] See above, p. 65 n. 237 .Those who cannot countenance a raid on Amastris before the 860 raid on Constantinople appear to disregard the possibility of raiding by the Volga Rus' approaching from the west of the Black Sea.

[346] Zavagno is persuaded that the miracle more likely than not refers to the Rus' raids of which the 860 attack on the capital was part, and the national disquiet that must have generated. Zavagno (2009), 138.

[347] Crow and Hill (1995), 260.

[348] The triple sanctuary was, as Krautheimer points out, widespread by the start of the seventh century but the form was by no means standard across the empire and, indeed, was seemingly resisted in Constantinople. The awkwardness evident in the arrangement of the eastern spaces in churches such as the Fatih Camii, Tirilye and the so-called Church H at Side show that the eighth century was still a period of experimentation. Mansel (1963), 169. Buchwald (1984), 206. Krautheimer (1986), 298-9. Ousterhout (1999), 17.

3.2.3.1 Foundation form

The large extent of the space enclosed by the FC walls has been noted above. This aspect, as well as foundation shape, is relevant in considering in which period the church is likely to have been originally constructed.

Both Eyice and Crow and Hill noted that the single naved, single apsed church form occurred across Byzantine lands in a variety of contexts and eras,[349] and the latter compared the form of the Amastris churches to some structures in the Binbirkilise region, particularly to Church No. 36,[350] dated to the seventh or eighth century.[351] It was certainly a single naved structure with a single apse but there are a number of aspects that separate it from the Amastris churches. It is small, barely 12m long (including the apse). The apse is seven sided and the nave is divided into shallow bays with roofs supported by wall piers.

There is no doubt that the single naved, single apse form was widespread. The type appears in the newly Christianized Bulgar lands but the Bulgarian examples are universally small, around 10m – 12m long, and appear to have been erected close to main basilicas or as baptisteries or chapels.[352] Only two have been uncovered in Pliska and none in Preslav. The form was used as a modest adjunct to other structures. The Amastris churches, particularly FC, are major structures.

[349] Crow and Hill (1995), 260.
[350] Eyice (1954), 103-4.
[351] Ramsay and Bell (1909), 176.
[352] Mijatev (1974), 111; see particularly examples No 6 and No 4, p.115.

Single naved and apsed churches are, likewise, also found throughout Cherson, one or two to each individual quarter of the city, as local chapels. All are small and are dateable to the late Byzantine period. Likewise, the single naved chapel has been identified as the commonest design in the empire of Trebizond, characterized, there, by vaulting on supporting ribs.[353] In that, the closeness in design to church 36, Binbirkilise is to be noted.

Single naved chapels and churches have been identified along the Pontic shore. Examples are to be found at Gedik Kaya Kilisie (near modern Giresun) a hill fort containing such a chapel barely 6m long,[354] and at Fol Maden where there was an unusual twin parallel-apsed church about 10m, possibly middle Byzantine but also conceivably thirteenth-century,[355] and a number in Trebizond itself.[356] Only about three or four of the latter are agreed to have been built prior to 1204. These are also small and barrel vaulted.[357]

Although, therefore, the ground plan of the single naved chapel is widespread, nothing of the size of FC is to be found constructed in the ninth century or after. KM alone is as large as a typical cross-in-square church of the tenth century. Churches by then had become small and intimate, appropriate for small congregations of around a hundred.[358] Those structures are not the appropriate comparators for the Amastris churches, either stylistically or chronologically.

[353] Sinclair (1987), 27.
[354] Bryer and Winfield (1985), 132 – 3 and figs 22 and 23.
[355] Ibid, 158 -9, fig. 35.
[356] Ibid, Chart of Concordance, 248 – 80.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Krautheimer (1986), 343; Mango (1985), 97.

The basilical form is, perhaps, more relevant. Whilst it can be argued that neither KM nor FC was conceived as a true basilica with aisles, they do have the longitudinal emphasis of the basilica and it is the form with which they have most in common. Eyice suggested that there once may have been wooden aisle divisions but there is no evidence of that in the Amastris churches, nor, indeed, that such a solution was ever adopted anywhere else.[359]

The church of St Anne in Trebizond (884/5) reveals a local desire to retain a basilical form as it is also to be seen in Mesembria as late as the end of the tenth century,[360] and in Kastoria from the end of the ninth to the eleventh century. Neither St Anne nor St Stephen is entirely comparable with the Amastris churches, having tripartite apses. One of the Kastoria churches, however, H. Nikolaos tou Kasnitse, is indeed a single naved church with a single rounded apse and a wooden roof (as had the Amastris churches). It is dated to the eleventh or the twelfth century.[361] The church is, at about 12m long and 5.5m wide, small - about the size of KM. The large nave area of FC still sets it apart from middle Byzantine building.

The basilical form is also to be found in Cherson as witness the Basilica within the Basilica (fig 3 (b)) dateable to the tenth century with a single semi-circular apse.[362] The outer shell of this church encloses a large space but its central nave space (6m by 13m) is roughly identical to that of KM.

[359] Eyice (1954), 101.
[360] See pp. 196-7.
[361] Ćurčić (2010), 382. Epstein (1980), 195 for the earlier date; plan, p. 191, fig. 5. Liturgical requirements were satisfied by apsidal niches in each wall either side of the apse.
[362] See pp. 239-247 for a discussion of this church.

That Chersonite church apart, the scale of the enclosed space at FC is reminiscent of the nave areas of buildings in the post-Justinianic era of the seventh and eighth centuries, such as the Koimesis at Nikaia (20m by 10m) and St Nicholas at Demre (27m by 8m),[363] churches still planned for large congregations.

The absence of a triple apse may be an indicator of date. In the seventh and eighth centuries the tripartite apse, although increasingly common, was not yet an essential element – the liturgy and its associated symbolism was not yet fully settled. There also seems to have been a divergence in practice between the provinces and the capital. The triple sanctuary seems to have been widespread in the provinces by the seventh century but there is evidence that its development was resisted in the capital, possibly because its liturgy differed.[364] Areas under the direct influence of Constantinople (including, as we have seem, Amastris) may have done likewise. Support for this view may be provided by the cathedral at (Thracian) Herakleia (on the north coast of the Sea of Marmara, modern Marmaraeğlisi), dated to a period between the sixth and the ninth century.[365] A single apse terminates a square naos which is extended by a chancel bay and a narthex and atrium creating a structure whose focus is longitudinal, albeit domed. Furthermore there is an identifiable seventh- to ninth-century phase in the church at Constantinople now known as the Kalenderhane Camii near the Valens aqueduct. This phase was characterized by a single rounded apse possibly appended to a square plan and timber roofed (possibly

[363] A tentative date of the eighth century has been assigned to St Nicholas by Peschlow. For a plan see Krautheimer (1986), 288, fig. 251. For a discussion, Peschlow (1975), 303-359.
[364] Krautheimer (1986), 299 and 495 n. 17
[365] Kalinka (1898), 4-14. Ruggieri (1991), 235 opts for the earlier date.

ca. 25m long).[366] The original structure did not have the pastophoria which were added at a later date.

Having said that, however, the triple apsed form had, it seems, arrived in Amastris by the early eighth century in the form of a structure on the island of Tavşan Adası. This has been associated with the patriarch Cyrus who had lived in isolation on "the island of Amastris".[367] Its foundations reveal a centrally focused form. The east façade terminates with three rounded (but not semi-circular) apses. Although the supporting piers create a Greek cross arrangement there is a longitudinal, basilical emphasis. Chambers are added at each corner and the nave is separated from these by the long wall piers. There is no communication between these chambers and the nave. They are not pastophoria but chapels for private worship.[368] The wall piers could have supported a dome. It has been dated to the seventh to the eighth centuries. Its mixed squared blockwork and brick courses, together with the presence of columns and mosaic flooring certainly suggest a pre-ninth-century dating.

In Lycia, like Amastris geographically distant from the capital, there are also some structures of interest. Despite the distance this region seems to have been closely associated with developments in the capital and partaken in its architectural culture as witness the domed basilica at Dereağzi.[369] There were no pastophoria in a single rounded apsed church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel and known to have been

[366] Striker and Kuban (1997), 79.
[367] Theo, 375; Mango & Scott (1997), 523.
[368] For a description and plan see Ruggieri (1995), 66f and fig.20 (65) for a plan. For additional reference, Ruggieri (1991), 233. It has been suggested that this church and the nearby remains of two other churches together with foundations of other structures could be a monastic establishment associated with the earlier settlement there of Patriarch Cyrus. Crow and Hill (1995), 261; TIB, 168. See p. 57 for the source reference.
[369] See Morganstern (1983) for description, discussion and plans. Uncertainty remains over its dating; from the early ninth to the beginning of the tenth century being the range. Ousterhout (2001), 8-9.

built before 812.[370] This structure was about 25m long (excluding the apse). Church No. 6 at Dikmen is a single naved, single apsed structure measuring some 15m. in length, including the apse and is close, in that dimension, to FC (at ca. 6m width it is much narrower).[371] This church was built within an earlier triconch, dateable to the sixth century.[372] Church No. 6, predating, it seems, the domed structures at Myra and Dereağzi, is a product of the early ninth or late eighth century.

The evidence, on balance, on the basis of foundation plan and surface area enclosed, points to an eighth-century original building period. That chimes neatly with the evidence of the original construction period of the walls.[373] The masonry and embellishment of the superstructure does not, however, support that dating.

3.2.3.2 Masonry and embellishment

Examination by Crow and Hill of the mortars of the walls and the churches revealed a close relationship between the two. They considered that the lower courses of both churches have block-work comparable to the earlier phases of the walls with the remaining superstructure in smaller coursed material being comparable to later phases.[374] Whilst there are large blocks in the lowest registers of both churches (and particular that of FC) it cannot, in truth, be said that the difference in the type of masonry is necessarily so clear. Large stones are likely to be used as foundation and initial courses particularly here to create level bases on sloping sites. There do not, however, appear to be great differences in the quality of the stones and the

[370] Harrison (1963), 126-129; for a plan see p. 125.
[371] Ibid, 130-131; plan at p. 130, fig. 8.
[372] Ibid, 149.
[373] Crow and Hill (1995), 258 -259.
[374] Ibid, 259.

applications of mortar between the lower and the upper parts of the superstructure seem the same. The difference, such as it is, is that, in FC, there is a greater use of larger and more carefully dressed stone than is evident in KM. This is understandable since FC was the primary church and cathedral of the city and, as such, was presumably the first to be constructed.

The masonry of the two churches is of the intermediate phases described earlier (p.72). The pattern of alternating bands of brick and stone, intermediate style B, is directly comparable with that of the lighthouse, the only other structure built in that style. It is to be noted that in the lighthouse the brick bands are, as the churches, of three courses.

The form and positioning of *spolia* in the church also links them to the intermediate phase A of the walls. Even though the *spolia* insertion is restrained, the fragments chosen are large, decorative and placed in positions where they can be seen. Furthermore there has been care in their selection. The lintels of the entrances to FC match those of the eastern and west gates of the main fortifications[375] and there is a clear relationship between the motifs on those lintels and those on the fragments inserted in the south wall of Tower G. The masonry of this tower from its base to above the spoil is comparable to that of FC, as it is to the south façade of the Boz Tepe barbican gate.

The most dramatic form of external decorative display is the *opus reticulatum* bands. Both churches have this. In both churches it is applied on upper registers. Both

[375] Crow and Hill (1995), 259.

churches have identical forms of brick heads around apertures. A brick band forms the base course for the *opus reticulatum* in both structures as well as the point from which window heads spring. All these indicators suggest the reticulate facings were an integral part of the building of the churches in the form in which they presently survive. Similar arguments apply to the issue of the terracotta rosettes. Crow and Hill consider these to have been the product of a second major rebuilding of FM and compare the rosettes with thirteenth century examples in Bulgaria[376] and the palace structure in Constantinople now known as Tekfur Serayi.[377] The rosettes have been inserted neatly above all the aperture heads in the building. If they had been inserted into existing masonry there would have been evidence of unevenness in the surrounding masonry due to the excavating away of the necessary bed. It is difficult to see such evidence. Surrounding stone masonry remains in courses and appears to closely abut the heads. The reticulate work appears to extend to the extrados curve of the heads.[378] The position is clearer on the south façade where the reticulate work is inserted neatly around the haunches of the arches of the heads (fig. 33).

Whilst one cannot be certain that the church did not go through a second major rebuilding phase during which, as Crow and Hill suggest, the rosettes were inserted, it is difficult to square the evident care taken to insert them with the type of masonry that was utilised in dealing with large areas of repair to both FC and KM. In both churches the breaks in masonry where such repair was carried out are clear. In FC the damage appears to have necessitated a rebuilding of the upper register of the apse.

[376] The earliest example of this decorative form in Bulgaria has been found on a structure dated to the late ninth or early tenth century. See below p. 191.
[377] Crow and Hill (1995), 260.
[378] There have been recent repairs and restoration work that masks the original form but Eyice's images, particularly Eyice (1954), Plate XXIII, 2 shows masonry in similar form to that elsewhere in the apse extending up to the curve of the heads.

Here no step was taken to re-establish reticulate facings that must originally have extended to roof height as they do on the flank walls in both FC and KM and, originally, on the apse of KM (figs 19, 20, 24, 31). There is also some evidence of repair damage to the northwest corner of FC (fig. 21) although this may be merely levelling work as previously suggested.[379] On the south façade there is an area of discontinuance where a door has been filled and a zone to the east of that also shows a discontinuance of the brick bands (fig. 35). The north façade appears to have suffered greater damage than the south. The integrity of the *opus mixtum* masonry is more evident on the latter (fig.36).[380]

The areas of repair to KM are more noticeable and extensive and appear, primarily, to have been necessary to the upper registers of the north façade resulting in much of the reticulate facing here being lost (fig. 31 top). Also lost is the brick band that once divided the two sections of facings. The voids have been filled with small stones similar in type to that used in lower registers but more roughly squared and with much less concern for maintaining courses. The repair work to the north façade is in very similar masonry to upper registers of the main fortification walls (fig. 38). There has been a modification made at the west end of the north façade revealed by a significant break in the stone and brick courses in the registers below the springing of the aperture arch there (fig. 34). It seems a door has been sealed leaving the upper section as a window. The lunette has also been filled and an insertion has been made of an antique spoil together with two lateral insertions (which do not match in width), all of which may have supported a canopy at some stage. The whole surrounding area appears to have suffered damage that was repaired and reconfigured (fig. 31, lower

[379] P. 92.
[380] Compare fig. 36 with the general appearance of the north façade of FC revealed by the image in Crow and Hill (1990), 11.

right). As with the *opus reticulatum* above, the repairers did not appear to be concerned with re-establishing the original brick courses with the ruined or disturbed zone simply with being filled with roughly squared stone. As with FC, the south façade in contrast appears not to have been disturbed and retains its original integrity (fig. 33).

We can, therefore, detect three phases in construction relevant to the churches. The first (intermediate A) involved structural enhancement of the city walls by the addition of extra towers, revealed by the absence of bond with the curtain wall (fig. 16).[381] This phase is also associated with surface enhancement through carefully selected decorative *spolia* and is represented by Tower G, the Boz Tepe south gate and the lower registers of the West outer gate (pp. 42-43). There is no use of brick. A second and subsequent phase (intermediate B) is evidenced by the extensive use of brick courses in masonry and the forming of arches. This is the architecture of the churches and the lighthouse. This phase also involves the use of the same types of carefully chosen *spolia* as in phase A. Thirdly there is a later repair phase undertaken with irregularly squared stones, roughly coursed and without regard to maintaining the brick courses and reticulate patterns of phase B.

I have proposed a dating period for the intermediate phases A and B as being from ca. 804/5 to the 830s (pp. 87-9). How can those phases be best associated with events affecting Amastris from the start of the ninth century? There are events in which, we may expect, building and/or repair work to have been undertaken. Firstly there is

[381] Crow and Hill (1990), 8. Both Tower G and Tower E reveal clear evidence of absence of bond. Tower E is, as Crow and Hill mention, is exceptional. It is broader and less wide and effectively buttresses the curtain wall where it changes in alignment (fig. 4). Tower E is visible in fig. 7 extreme right. Such structural enhancement seems to have been made to an area that bore the brunt of landward attacks.

repair work that may have been undertaken contemporary with that of Ankyra (804/5) as a result of Arab depredations and coincident with a rise in status of the city or of its administrator (p. 56). I have suggested (pp. 83-7) that Tower G and the Boz Tepe south gate may well have been associated with such action. The wall enhancements are directed towards a landward (Arab) threat and the expressive spoil display on the Tower is likewise to be seen from that direction.

We have seen, through the evidence of the West outer gate, that phase B followed phase A chronologically, and that those phases were distinct and separate evidenced by the absence of brick masonry from the latter. The two phases, however, can be seen to be closely linked physically and in time. The association of the lighthouse (phase B) with the adjoining structure (phase A) (fig. 8) is indicative as is the use on the churches of the same type of carefully selected *spolia* as in phase A. I have argued (pp. 87-9) that the lighthouse was probably the result of works of enhancement consequent upon the creation of the new theme of Paphlagonia with Amastris as its port and the base of the theme fleet under the *katepano*. The seaward emphasis of those works is a relevant factor in making that argument.

We are therefore led to conclude that the churches, as they presently survive were rebuildings on eighth century foundations as part of the same enhancement of the theme and are to be dated after the 820s. Is it possible to be more certain when that rebuilding may have occurred? There are pointers to both an early (820s) dating and to a later (860s to 880s) one. Eyice was of the view that they were built in a simple style because of a lack of resources.[382] They are certainly erected to a straightforward

[382] Eyice (1954), 105.

design but the care taken to insert the reticulate facings, make bricks for the masonry, create carefully laid brick arches and insert the pottery rosettes suggests a construction period when the town was not under immediate threat and one when resources were available for redevelopment and enhancement. Aping the external display in the Bedesten (and using its material to do so) demonstrates a deliberate association, on the part of the builders, to the imperial Roman past of Amastris. This reinforces the view that the churches were constructed as part of an imperial redevelopment of the zone.

(a) Early dating.

The evidence for the early dating is speculative and weak. It must have been the case that attention was given to the enhancement of facilities at Amastris when Paphlagonia was created. We also know, from written sources and the inscriptions on the defensive walls at Constantinople, that Theophilos (829-42) undertook much building work and was concerned with enhancing imperial defensive works even to the extent of building a garrison town at Sarkel for the Khazars.[383] There is no direct evidence that he sponsored or funded work in Amastris. The lighthouse construction may well date from the time of the creation of the theme but it and the re-building of the churches might be separated by a number of years. The mixed stone and brick masonry common to both was a characteristic form for Byzantine building [384] and is evident on a number of ninth century buildings such as the church at Dereağzi.[385] It is a plausible scenario that the rebuilding of the churches took place following, and as a direct result of, the Rus' raiding described in the VGA.

[383] *DAI*/ 42. Treadgold (1988), 265-6; 287; 294-5; 306-7.
[384] Ousterhout (1999), 169.
[385] Morganstern (1983).

One possible indicator of the time of building of FC is provided by the sculpted cross on its south façade. The use and purpose of such an emblem will be addressed later.[386] Its prophylactic power is, seemingly, being displayed to the landward side seeking to protect the church and, by extension, the city from a threat in that direction. The threat was not the Rus' coming by sea but the Arabs who were still, in the first quarter of the ninth century, the predominant threat in Anatolia. Although that threat abated after 838 there may still have been a fear that it would re-appear. That may have lasted for some years. It was probably not until the second half of the ninth century that it was clear the major threat to the region was from the Rus'. The insertion of a protective cross against Arab raiding may have been appropriate up to the mid ninth century.

Another possible indicator is the retention, upon rebuilding, of the original (eighth-century) foundation plan. It is possible that in the first third of the ninth century "new forms" were not fully established, or, perhaps, not deemed appropriate in all cases. Centrally focused forms might not simply have been in the standard repertoire of the local church builders but that explanation loses some force when the remains of the church uncovered on the nearby island, Tavşan Adası, are considered. [387]The basilical form, however, remained dominant, indeed preferred in certain circumstances, well into the second half of the ninth century, as seen in the forms erected in the newly Christianised Bulgar lands.[388]

Another explanation for the choice of foundation is also possible; that of the limitation of surface and space. The churches are set directly onto bedrock in awkward sloping sites. To excavate fresh foundations in such terrain would be

[386] See below pp. 145-8.
[387] See above, p. 101.
[388] Mijatev (1974) 75-89. See below, pp.164-173 for further discussion of Bulgar building.

difficult, expensive and time consuming. In any event the space to create a structure of differing formation would have been limited. It is likely that habitations between the walls and the cliffs were closely packed – as they are now, and room to manoeuvre would be severely restricted. Furthermore the rebuilt churches still possibly had to accommodate large congregations, particularly FC as the primary church of the city. The foundation plan retention cannot be seen as unequivocally pointing to an early period.

(b) Later dating.

We do know that Michael III and Basil I did undertake rebuilding work in various locations around the Black Sea (in Mesembria[389] and Trebizond) and it is not beyond possibility that they undertook such work in Amastris in the course of which the significant rebuilding of the two churches took place. Such wholesale rebuilding seems to have occurred at the church of St Anne in Trebizond. The plaque inserted over the south door refers to a restoration by Basil I, Leo VI and Alexander (884/885). As has been noted the work must have been from its foundations because its masonry is all of a piece with no suggestions of phases or segments of repair.[390] The steep elevation of St Anne is reminiscent of the appearance from the east of KM which may suggest a comparable date for the Amastris reconstructions.[391] It is to be noted that the form of St. Anne was of a "traditional" three-aisled basilica (fig.79[b]).

[389] See pp. 128, 173.
[390] Bryer and Winfield (1985), 219.
[391] For a plan and description of St. Anne see Balance (1960), 154-155. For an image from the northeast see Rodley (1996), 142, fig. 111.

It is to be noted that the dedicatory inscription on St Anne embellishes a large fragment of marble spoil inserted as a lintel over the south door depicting a *Nike* (winged victory) and a warrior.[392] Such careful choice and use of spoil as both decoration and pronouncement is analogous to its use in the Amastris churches.[393] There are other similarities between this structure and the Amastris churches. Squared blocks laid mainly to courses and brick heads over apertures and rounded apses with three long windows in the main apse are particularly to be noted.[394]

There is evidence that embellishment of exterior surfaces with reticulate patterns arose in the latter half of the ninth century. Reticulate forms are observable in Kastoria where tiles in this pattern appear on the dome of the Koubelidiki (Panaghia Kasriotissa) dated to the end of the ninth century or the early/ mid-tenth.[395] Reticulate patterns also appear in the Episcope church at Tegea (second half tenth century) where they embellish the upper registers of the central apse[396] and commencing, furthermore, at the springing of the window arches in similar fashion to the Amastris churches. Vokotopoulos has viewed this structure as part of his "pro Helladic" school of the late ninth to the tenth century.[397] The pattern is to be found on the main apse on the Panaghia at Zourtsa, Greece (tenth century)[398] and on the dome of the Koimesis at Lambovo (Albania), a structure also possibly in the tenth century.[399]

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[392] For an image of the plaque see Bryer and Winfield (1985), II, plates 164 and 164b; Koromila (2002), 261.
[393] See above, p. 103 .
[394] There is no mixed brick and stone masonry. Save for brick heads which appear occasionally in citadel walls, brick is not a favoured building material in Trebizond; see generally Bryer and Winfield (1985), 186 ff. The absence of alternating brick and stone masonry cannot be taken as a signifier of different build periods in such circumstances.
[395] Ćurčić (2010), 323. Epstein (1980), 195. For an image see Mango (1985), 138.
[396] Ćurčić (2010), 337. Megaw (1966), 10-22, plate IIIa.
[397] Vokotopoulos (1989), 202-206.
[398] Ćurčić (2010), 310.
[399] Vokotopoulos (1989), 199-202. The dating is not secure. It has been dated to as late as the thirteenth century. Ćurčić (2010), 321.

It appears clear that at the end of the ninth century reticulate patterns, as a form of surface embellishment, was current in the repertoire of builders in Greece, Epirus and Macedonia although, as will be seen,[400] those areas developed in many ways separately from the capital and other regions of the empire. Lattice work patterns have been discovered as internal decoration in the church at Dereağzi.[401] The balance of opinion seems to be that the structure was a product of the late ninth century or even the early tenth.[402] The church, it will be recalled, was in the form of a domed basilica comparable with H. Eirene, Constantinople,[403] reinforcing the proposition that retaining a basilical form for the Amastris churches into the late ninth century is tenable.

(c) The repair phase.

It will be recalled that a third repair phase was identified (p. 106). This was of partial repair to, primarily, the north facades of the churches. When the damage necessitating these repairs occurred is a matter of conjecture. They may have been required by damage caused by Rus' raids. As the Primary Chronicle makes clear, the Rus' raids in 860 and at the start of the tenth century were vicious and highly destructive. The target of those raids, however, was persistently Constantinople and as is made explicitly clear in the *DAI* the raiding route was down the west coast of the Black

[400] See below pp. 150-1.
[401] Morganstern (1983), 94 -5.
[402] Ousterhout (2001), 8-9, considers that it is comparable to early tenth-century Constantinopolitan churches such as Constantine Lips. Krautheimer (1986), 285 dates it to the early and Mango (1985), 96, to the late ninth century. Morganstern dates it to the ninth but possibly as late as the tenth century. Morganstern (1983), 169.
[403] Ousterhout (2001), 8.

Sea.[404] That does preclude the possibility of raids by bands other than Kievan. There is no documentary evidence of any such raid on Amastris. Alternatively, they may have been a product of the Genoese period when the walls were repaired with the addition of Genoese signature features. Although the damage to both structures appears to be predominately on the facades facing the sea the south facades may in any event have been protected – as they are now – by the press of habitations. Whatever the cause, the relatively rough masonry and lack of concern for reinstating the decorative forms suggests work done when resources were strained and/or very rapid repairs were required or external appearance was of much reduced concern. They do not represent work linked with enhancement still less with one of imperial involvement.

(d) Conclusion.

It has to be acknowledged that nothing at present points unambiguously one way or the other for the dating of the Amastris churches. The logical necessity of works of enhancement to the fortifications and harbour structures consequent upon the elevation of the city to the main port of the newly established theme strongly suggests that period for the dating. The recognisable phases in the fortification masonry and erection of the lighthouse feature are consistent with such attention.

The thrust of the evidence of recorded work on churches on the Black Sea littoral points, however, to the second half of the ninth century rather than the first and to the reigns of Basil either with Michael III or, later, his sons. This is not to argue that

[404] *DAI* 9/ 94 – 100. PC, 6371-6374 (863-866), 6412-6415 (904-907), 6443-6449 (935-941).

Theophilos paid no attention to such matters merely that there seems to be no record of them.[405] Basil I, by all accounts, was inspired to create a Roman *imperium* in the manner of Justinian I seeking, as his grandson put it in the *Vita Basilii*, "the well ordered state of old".[406] We are left in no doubt as to his efforts to repair and rebuild churches.

A reasonably safe, and certainly the most cautious, dating of the Amastris churches would be between 830 and the 880s. I would be inclined to narrow this range slightly to between 830 and 860, covering the periods, respectively, of the creation of the theme of Paphlagonia (and the enhancement work consequent upon that), the restructuring of the theme of the Klimata to Cherson (849) and the first Rus' attack on Constantinople. Whichever is correct, the Amastris churches represent some of the earliest examples of external architectural display.

Historical context and external display.

It is a stated aim of this study to reconcile the physical evidence of the structures, and most particularly the evidence of external display, with the historical contexts of the areas in which they are constructed.

For Amastris we have identified two main phases of external display, the "*spolia* phase" (intermediate A) and the *opus reticulatum* phase (intermediate B). The example of the lighthouse and associated buildings, the use of *spolia* in the churches and in the repairs to the walls (Tower G) and the Boz Tepe barbican all show how

[405] See pp. 37-41 for a discussion of the source material for the buildings of Theophilos.
[406] Theo. Cont. V, 72, p. 315; Mango (1985), 108; Ostrogorsky (1940), 239 -40.

closely those phases can be associated. We must also reconcile the presence of the apotropaic device (the sculpted cross) in FC. Reconciling those elements with the historical context will both aid the dating of the structures but also indicate the purpose(s) of the display.

We have seen that there is no evidence of the penetration of the Arab forces to the Black Sea region until the start of the ninth century. Repairs and enhancements to the fortifications at Amastris suggest the penetration had occurred or at least was anticipated to occur. The *spolia* display emphasises the defiance and the cross seeks supernatural protection. They are appropriately dateable to the first half of the ninth century and reflect the continuing Arab threat.

The two intermediate phases are found to associated, physically as in the lighthouse assemblage, and intermingled as in the presence of *spolia* with the cross and the "brick phase" in FC. How is that to be reconciled? As Crow and Hill have stated, there is no reason why there should not have been relatively small intervals between building phases.[407] The *opus reticulatem* of the churches, the brick heads in them and in the aches of the defensive gates, and *opus mixtum* masonry are to be linked and are associated with significant works of enhancement of the fortifications particularly focussed on the western harbour. The enhancements are seaward looking. The conclusion that they relate to the raising of the status of Paphlagonia to a theme with Amastris as its second city and main (only) port in ca. 820 is compelling. The increased status is confirmed by the presence there, commanding a theme fleet, of a *katepano* taking his orders directly from the capital and acting upon them

[407] Crow and Hill (1995), 258.

independently of the *strategos*.[408] The creation of Paphlagonia and other contemporary themes on the Black Sea littoral reflected the empire's concern with a fresh source of danger to trade and security, the Rus'. The aping of the external display of the Bedesten (and using its material to do so) is a direct reference to the imperial Roman past of Amastris and strongly points to a phase of imperial redevelopment, the theme reorganisation. Added to this are the clear parallels between the fortifications at Amastris and other identifiably imperial works such as at Ankara and Nikaia identified by Crow and Hill in terms of size, massiveness, style and form.[409] Imperial involvement in the original construction and in the later ninth century repairs and enhancements following soon after is heavily suggested.

One final issue should be raised that might have played some part in the choice of architectural forms and their external display, that of the influence of the local elite. We detect the presence of such a group in the VGA who wielded power and authority independently of the capital. The delegation that sought to persuade George to return to Amastris to aid in its governance comprised eminent citizens as well as churchmen and magistrates.[410] That same group then forcibly abducted him.[411] There is no evidence that such elite had any part to play in the choice of form or display of the two churches (allowing that the fortifications were to an imperial design) but we will see, when considering the structures in Cherson[412] and in the Bulgar lands,[413] that local elites did influence forms locally. In the case of Cherson, the retention of a basilical form well into the tenth century whilst other forms were being introduced

[408]. See above pp. 67-8.
[409] Crow and Hill (1995), 255, 258, 264.
[410] VGA 16.
[411] VGA 17.
[412] See pp. 245-7.
[413] See pp. 199-200.

from the capital seems to have been a locally driven elite decision.[414] We shall also see the closeness of the links between Amastris and Cherson throughout our period.[415] In his recent study of cities in transition in the period 500-900 Zavagno recognised (having closely studied four cities including Amastris) the distinctive role played by local elites in "moulding the social, cultural, political, religious and…economic aspects of urban life" acting in differing local contexts and producing a range of differing city types.[416] In the case of the Black Sea, as a closed zone with its web of connections, we may detect in our study cultural exchange reflected in architecture linked to those elites and reflecting what Zavagno has characterised as "Black Sea urbanism".[417]

[414] See pp. 245-6.
[415] See pp. 246-7. See also Crow and Hill (1995), 261. Zavagno (2009), 147-8.
[416] Zavagno (2009), 168-9.
[417] Ibid, 151.

III. THE THREE BLACK SEA CITIES: MESEMBRIA, THE BORDER CITY (fig 39).[418]

1. Pre-ninth-century Mesembria

Mesembria (modern Nessebâr) was built on a rocky peninsula, measuring about 850m by 300m, forming the northern extremity of the Bay of Bourgas. It lay some 230km from Constantinople by sea and about 400 km by the quickest road system operating in the middle Byzantine time period.[419] It and its immediate neighbouring region came to some prominence in the ninth and first quarter of the tenth century.

The city began as a Doric colony of the eighth century BC.[420] It and other locations in and around the Bay of Bourgas provided good anchorages for Black Sea trading.[421] It was also capable of being easily defended, linked as it was to the mainland by a narrow 400m long isthmus occasionally covered by sea even into modern times.[422] This feature was enhanced, from antique times, by encircling defensive walls.[423] The walls extended to a height of 10m in places and enclosed the settlement on all sides.

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[418] For general histories of Mesembria including for the medieval period see Velkov (1992), Gjuzelev (1978), Gjuzelev (1988) and Chumbuleva (1981) and for a detailed summary of the city's history monuments, sources and bibliography (to 1991), see TIB 6, 355-9. For detailed descriptions of relatively recent examinations of structures, inscriptions, pottery etc see Velkov (ed.) (1969), *Nessèbre* Vol. 1, Sofia and Velkov (ed.) (1980), *Nessèbre* Vol. 2, Sofia. For the Black Sea coast generally, its history, geography, trading links and development see TIB 6, 75-155 and Soustal (1991) and Soustal (1992).

[419] Soustal (1991), 132-146, particularly 139-145 where evidence of north-south road systems for the Byzantine era are summarised.

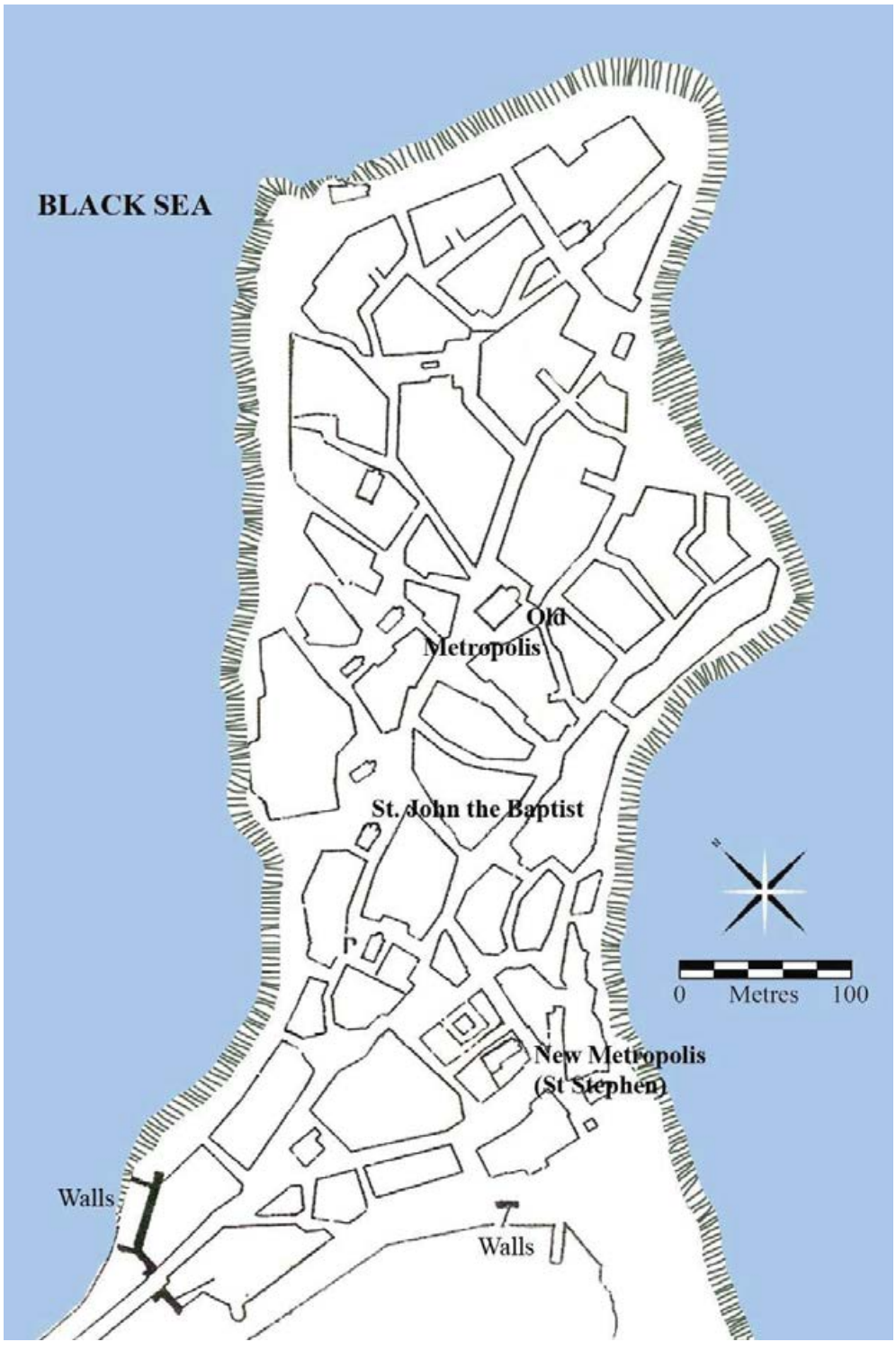
[420] TIB 6, 355.

[421] Black Sea Pilot, 166 -174

[422] Ibid, 170

[423] TIB 6, 357.

Figure 39.



Mesembria.

The city acquired a diverse cultural mix from an early stage in the Byzantine era due to an imperial policy of resettlement, and trading across the Black Sea. In the late antique or early Christian period Syrian traders were settled there. One grave inscription refers to a homeland in Apamea.[424] The city's ethnic and cultural mix was probably further enhanced in the eighth century as the result of resettlement, in Thrace, of Syrian and Armenian monophysite and Paulician heretics.[425] According to Theophanes, the family of the future Leo III (the Isaurian), Syrians from Germanicea (Mar`ash), was resettled specifically in Mesembria.[426] When Krum took Mesembria in 812, he found it full of traders and settlers.[427] The success of the city's trading is shown by the extent of the wealth in the great quantity of gold and silver he found there.[428]

The importance of the town to Black Sea trade before the ninth century is revealed by a discovery there of seals of imperial *kommerkiarioi* and *protokommerkiarioi* in some numbers. These seals have been dated to the years 690 -730 and 775.[429] Seals also reveal that in the eighth century civil administration of the city was under the control of an *archon* based in Mesembria.[430]

As a trading centre Mesembria must have looked primarily to the sea. It did not lie on any Thracian land routes that crossed the province north-south and south-east

[424] Velkov (1969), 213-4.
[425] A number of such examples are set out in the Chronicle of Theophanes. Syrian monophysites in 745-6, Syrians and Armenians responsible for spreading the Paulician heresy in 755-6, and yet more Syrian heretics in 777-8 (Mango & Scott (1997), 584, 593 and 623).
[426] Theo, 391; Mango & Scott (1997), 542.
[427] Theo, 499, Mango & Scott (1997), 683.
[428] Theo, 499, Mango & Scott (1997), 683.
[429] Jordanov (2003)118-9. Nesbitt and Oikonomides (1991), I, 174-6.
[430] Gjuzelev (1978), 54; TIB 6, 355.

although there were many north-south connecting routes between those major highways.[431] The east-west march of the Balkan mountains limited possibilities of major through routes orientated north-south. That Mesembria lay somewhat away from major land routes is shown by the fact that it was not incorporated into the first Bulgarian state, even though Krum's expansion took the boundary of his state well to the south of the Bay of Bourgas. That said, the city was not entirely divorced from land based trade. Evidence has been found of a route which passed from Pliska to Constantinople through Debeltos (modern Debelt) 20 kms west of the Bay of Bourgas, from which there was communication with Ankhialos (modern Pomorie) and Mesembria. A milestone at Porj about 18 kms from Mesembria reveals how close the land route may have been.[432]

The importance of the city in the early Byzantine period may be reflected in building work carried out on the walls. Bricks bearing the stamp of Justinian I (and similar to those found in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople) have been found there.[433] This has been used to support an argument that imperially sponsored building was carried out in Mesembria, seemingly as part of the programme, referred to in Prokopios, of renewing and strengthening the fortifications around the Black Sea, notwithstanding the city was not named in *Buildings*. There is no evidence however that there was any export from Constantinople of stamped bricks and it is not certain that the stamped bricks found in re-used (probably ninth-century) contexts were from sixth-century ruins in Mesembria.[434] Nevertheless it is the case that substantial work was carried out around the Black Sea, to the south, an area around Trapezus (Trebizond), and to the

[431] TIB 6, 139.
[432] TIB 6, 139-145.
[433] Ognenova-Marinova (1969), 118.
[434] Bardill (2004), 3.

north around the Maeotic Lake (the Sea of Azov), Cherson and Bosporos (modern Kerch).[435] That such work was carried out in the region around Mesembria, and the need for it, is revealed by the entry concerning Ankhialos, a mere 20 km further south along the coast. Prokopios noted that it was made a "walled city" and "made… free from danger",[436] and observed that the place was unwalled in earlier times (even though a host of Barbarians dwelt nearby).[437]

The masonry of the walls does point strongly to fifth- and sixth-century repair and renovation. Upon lower courses of classical cyclopian and rusticated ashlar masonry, there are regular courses of large square blocks and *opus mixtum* work together with pure brickwork all highly suggestive of Justinianic masonry.[438] The strength of Mesembria's fortification is revealed in Theophanes. Notwithstanding that he had siege engines of modern design available to him (and they were clearly needed) it still took Krum a month to take the city.[439]

The city was also important ecclesiastically from the early period. Two of the churches, of which significant remains survive, can be confidently dated to the period

[435] Prokopios, *Buildings*, III. vii. 1-17.
[436] Prokopios, *Buildings*, III. vii. 10-21.
[437] It is possible that Prokopios did not mention Mesembria's fortifications because they were still well preserved and only some refurbishment was needed. Not all places where work was carried out in the Justinianic period were mentioned by Prokopios. What Prokopios gave specific mention to were all extensive works and those effected *de novo*: the aqueduct at Trebizond, the new defences at Risê (another Black Sea port), the new fortress at Losorium, the founding of Petra in the Lazica, the restoration after demolition by Persians of Sebastopolis, and the walls of Cherson which had fallen considerably into ruin. It is further possible that the work at Mesembria took place after Prokopios' death. Ognenova-Marinova (1969), 119.
[438] For a full discussion of the masonry of Mesembria's fortifications, particularly the western gate area, and dating see Venedikov, Ognenova-Marinova and Petrov (1969), 29-94 and Venedikov (1969b), 125-154 and further below pp. 94-98. Observations here and below on the walls and churches are made by me following my personal examination of them during a week's visit to the town in 2003.
[439] Theo, 498. Mango & Scott (1997), 682.

of the fifth to the mid-seventh centuries, namely that known as the Old Metropolis (fig. 3(f)) and of the Virgin Eleusa. Both were large structures.

The Old Metropolis was a three aisled basilica with a three faced apse in a form and style highly suggestive, in foundation layout, of St John of Stoudios in Constantinople (founded 450) from the form of the apse to the proportion of aisles to nave and the presence of a narthex.[440] The *opus mixtum* and brick masonry of the lower courses is similar to that in the fortifications. The church of Virgin Eleusa,[441] of which only foundations remain, also had a triple faced aisle appended to a three aisled basilical plan of a similar scale to that of the Old Metropolis. The nave was divided from the aisles by similar brick piers also of similar dimensions to those now to be seen in the Old Metropolis (about 1m width) (figs 40 & 41).[442] Remains of a further early Christian church were found in north-west part of the city, north of the towers, and in that a capital was found bearing the monogram of Justinian I.[443]

The sizes of these structures and the apparent imperial sponsorship of at least one of them bespeak a city of considerable status ecclesiastically by the sixth and seventh

[440] Ćurčić (2010), 229. For a description of the structure see Rachénov (1932), 2-13 and for a more recent examination and consideration of its building phases see Bojadžiev (1962), 321-346. He discerned two phases differentiated by masonry forms, the earlier characterized by regular *opus mixtum*, the latter by less precise work and the asbsence of regular brick bands. The mortar types were also differentiable. Ibid, 324, 330.
[441] Velkov (1946), 61-70. The church was associated with a fourteenth-century monastery dedicated to the Theotokos Eleusa; TIB 6, 358. Ćurčić (2010), 229-30. Dating of this structure was aided by the discovery of a coin of Phokas (602-10); Velkov (1946), 69-70.
[442] Bojadžiev asserted that the aisles in the Old Metropolis were originally separated by columns and that the brick piers now surviving were part of a later reconstruction. That assertion seemed to be based solely upon a comparison with St. John of Studios where columns divided the nave. Bojadžiev (1962), 324-5. Ćurčić (2010), 229-30. Ćurčić rightly questions Bojadžiev's dating of the phases, the reconstruction phase being dated to the 7th to the 8th century partly on the basis that by the ninth-century church designs were of the Greek cross form. Bojadžiev (1962), 330. Ćurčić (2010), 851, n.128. He does not question the issue of nave arrangement. The close similarity between the piers of both structures in dimensions and masonry style suggests a common period of construction, or reconstruction.
[443] TIB 6, 358.

Figure 40.

Mesembria. Old Metropolis, piers.

Figure 41.

Mesembria. Virgin Eleusa. Nave piers.

centuries as, indeed, does the four step synthronon in the Old Metropolis. The city must have been a regular meeting place for ecclesiastical authorities to justify the imposing nature of the structures and the multiple step synthronon to accommodate a sizeable conclave meeting regularly. Such a conclusion is supported by the city's representation at councils. Up to the ninth century it was a suffragan bishopric of Andreanopolis and the bishop attended councils of 325 (Nikaia), 680/681, 691/692, 687 and 879 (all Constantinople).[444]

By the start of the ninth century the city was also playing an important role in military terms. When Krum took it he found there many siphons for the delivery of Greek Fire and the material itself.[445] Constantine IV used Mesembria as a base when the Bulgars first appeared on the scene in 680.[446] It clearly had facilities for anchorage for the fleet, met the comforts of the elite with the provision of baths. That it had facilities to cater to the elite is also shown by Justinian II's decision to settle the future emperor Leo III in Mesembria.[447]

Clearly Mesembria was an important naval base where the empire's secret weapon was stored, as well as a bustling, thriving trading entrepot and a transit port for the movement of peoples. Theophanes reports the loss of the city to Krum in 812 with great alarm and shock, not only because of the loss of the weaponry.[448] The city would have been full of all classes and ranks of people; high churchmen, monks, local and imperial elite, traders, ship owners, fishermen, artisans and sailors.

[444] Gjuzelev (1978), 56.
[445] Theo, 499; Mango & Scott (1997), 683. The Chronicle indicates that such equipment and material was also being stored at Debeltos.
[446] Theo, 358-359; Mango & Scott (1997), 499.
[447] Theo, 391.
[448] Theo. 499.

2. Mesembria and the Bulgars.

The role the city and its immediate vicinity were to play in our period was in respect of Byzantine-Bulgar relations. Entries in Theophanes for the seventh century foreshadowed it.

The Bulgars, not yet Christianised,[449] make their appearance in the Chronicle in 680 when they moved across the Danube and attacked Thrace penetrating as far as Varna (then Odyssos), some 70-80km north of Mesembria along the coast. When Justinian II took up arms against the Bulgars in 708/9 the Byzantine fleet was anchored off Ankhialos i.e. in either the Bay of Bourgas or in the minor bay between Ankhialos and Mesembria. When the Bulgars counter attacked, Justinian II took refuge in Ankhialos. It seems no attack was made on Mesembria though it was close by.[450] There is no further entry in Theophanes regarding this expedition. The boundary between Byzantium and the Bulgars may have been established at Debeltos as Dimitrov has argued.[451]

In 762/3 Emperor Constantine V campaigned against the Bulgars, attacking by sea and land and sending his fleet up the Black Sea. No mention is made of Mesembria but the land army went to Ankhialos.[452] A heavy Bulgar defeat, seen as putting the independence of the Bulgar state from Byzantium at risk, prompted a palace

[449] Khan Boris (864-5) accepts Christianity for the Bulgars but there is opposition from his nobles, the boyars, which is not finally overcome until 893 and the accession of Symeon (893-927).
[450] Theo, 376; Mango & Scott (1997), 525.
[451] Dimitrov (1992), 35-45
[452] Theo, 433; Mango & Scott (1997), 599

revolution within the Bulgar ruling class and one of them defected to the empire through Mesembria.[453]

In 812, as part of the campaign of expansion, Krum took Debeltos following a siege. Theophanes reports that the population went over voluntarily to him and they were then resettled (after which there appeared to be a wholesale flight from major cities in the border areas leaving vast new tracts of Thrace open to annexation by Krum).[454] Theophanes also reported that settlers along the River Strymon fled back to their own lands.[455] These were presumably the people Nikephoros had forcibly settled from other parts of the empire to repopulate Thrace after Krum's depredations in 809.[456]

There is no report of Krum emptying Mesembria of its population, still less of him destroying the city.[457] It was surely important to Krum that he had a functioning city. Despite the report that Debeltos was resettled entirely it is debateable whether it was as extensive and complete as that or, indeed, forcible since Theophanes suggests voluntary action by many.[458] Furthermore when Debeltos was recovered by Byzantium ca. 816 it was as a fully functioning town with an established population.[459]

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[453] Theo. 433.
[454] Theo, 495; Mango & Scott (1997), 679.
[455] Theo, 496.
[456] Theo, 486.
[457] Oikonomides (1985), 269-73, 273. Browning (1975), 94-5.
[458] Theo, 495; Mango & Scott (1997), 679.
[459] Whilst it would not have been in Krum's interest to destroy and entirely depopulate these towns, he may well have removed or even executed members of the elite, both military and civil, around whom insurrection activity could coalesce. There is some evidence that, about the time Krum took Mesembria, he executed Byzantine prisoners who refused to renounce Christianity. Treadgold (1988), 185. Treadgold notes that the martyrdoms are reported in "vague and conventional" terms. Ibid, n. 252. The reports may have been examples of standard *topoi* denigrating the pagan Bulgars but having little foundation in fact.

Despite the image created by Theophanes, Krum was concerned to maintain trade. His offer of peace terms presented in 812, seeking to revive an eighth-century treaty, allowed traders to move back and forth over the border and stipulated that they be properly regulated (i.e. through the *kommerkiarioi* on the Byzantine side). He was also keen to repatriate prisoners on both sides.[460] There were also high ranking Byzantines who voluntarily went over to him. In 814 Krum's reorganisation of his territories included appointments of individuals with Greek names and Byzantine titles.[461] No only did populations of "Greeks" remain in now Bulgar conquered lands but they included persons of military status.

In a campaign of 816, Leo V was successful in defeating a sizeable Bulgar army but he did not proceed to take Mesembria and that could only be because it was a well defended functioning city that had all the facilities for the garrisoning of an army, a further indicator that Krum maintained the integrity of the city.[462] By the terms of the treaty ending that campaign Sozopolis and Debeltos were ceded back to Byzantium. The treaty held for thirty years, and ninth-century seals show that Sozopolis then was the place of residence of an imperial *spatharios and turmarch* (next in order of precedence to a *strategos*).[463] Debeltos became the principal Byzantine border town in

[460] Theo, 497; Mango & Scott (1997), 681
[461] Treadgold (1988), 205.
[462] Theo. Cont. 24-25. That this was a significant defeat for the Bulgars is shown by the readiness of the Bulgar khan Omurtag to negotiate a treaty that involved the ceding of territory back to Byzantium, including Debeltos and Sozopolis. This treaty appeared to contain very similar terms to those proffered by Krum as to the location of the border and exchange of prisoners. The treaty is only partially preserved but it is reasonable to conjecture that it may also have contained terms concerning the regulation of trade. Its importance to the Bulgar state would hardly have lessened in the few years since Krum's death. That it was comprehensive in this respect is revealed by the fact that it successfully regulated Byzantine-Bulgar relations for the next thirty years. Treadgold takes the view that Mesembria was a ruin at the time of Leo's campaign; Treadgold (1988), 216. There is nothing in Theophanes to suggest that Krum rendered captured settlements uninhabitable. Towns and cities remained viable and targets for recovery on the part of the empire.
[463] Nesbitt and Oikonomides (1991), I, 180. Bury (1911), 41.

this region of Thrace regulating trade.[464] Debeltos was apparently a shared city on the River Sredecka, the largest part of which, on the northern bank, was in Bulgar hands with the southern bank held by the Byzantines.[465] This was where the Byzantine customs post was.[466] Such a place would be a point of significant cultural interchange, involving the regulation of trade and movement of peoples. It has been shown that *kommerkiarioi*, from the ninth century on, were concerned with riverine and coastal trade.[467] The Debeltos office would therefore be regulating Black Sea trade through the Bay of Bourgas, via Mesembria.

It is almost certainly the case that Krum would have introduced Bulgar and Slav settlers to dilute Byzantine/Christian elements as had been his practice elsewhere.[468] This is confirmed by archaeological evidence. Two types of non-Byzantine ceramics have been uncovered. One is Slavic, characterised by incised straight and wavy lines of a type found also in Rus' and Moravia. Another is a type found also in Pliska/Preslav and Novi Pazar. Both have been found together.[469] By the time of the reacquisition of the town by Byzantium in 863-4 there must have been an ethnically mixed population possibly even bilingual, as was the population of Thessaloniki.[470]

[464] Seals of *kommerkiarioi* of Debeltos dateable from 832-3 reveal such a role. Jordanov (2003), 59-61.
[465] Dimitrov (1992), 38-40. Dimitrov noted three variations in the seal designations, one of which referred, specifically, to Roman Debeltos and thus suggested a divided town part of which was not Roman.
[466] Ibid, 38-9.
[467] Dunn (1993), 3-24.
[468] It seems to be what he did in Debeltos. Dimitrov (1992), 38; based on inscription evidence.
[469] Čangova (1969), 121-124.
[470] VM, ch. 6. Cyril and Methodios, "being Thessalonians", spoke pure Slavic.

The city was recovered from the Bulgars in 863-4. An inscription records that Basil I and his sons Leo and Alexander (hence between 879 and 886) substantially re-built the city.[471]. It reads, as restored and transcribed by Oikonomides:

+ Τίνδε τὴν πόλιν ἐθνῶν χερσὶ ψθαρεῖσαν,

ἄνακτες ἐδόμησαν ἐκ βάθρων πάλιν

Βασιλειός τε λέων σὺν ′Αλεξάνδρῳ

οἱ Θεόστεπτοι βασιλεῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων.[472]

Oikonomides has argued that the destruction necessitating that work was wrought by the Bulgars when they were forced to hand over the city to the forces of Michael III in 864 and was a decision made in cold blood for strategic purposes to discourage easy reinstallation of Byzantine fortifications[473]. If the destruction was as widespread as the inscription suggests it is likely significant work would have been undertaken before 879-886, both to provide the citizens with appropriate ecclesiastical facilities and to fortify the city against Bulgar counter attacks, particularly if Debeltos once again, in or about 864, marked the border.[474] We know that Michael III undertook significant

[471] It is preserved on three marble slabs two of which survive, one in the Epigraphical Museum of Mesembria, and the other built into the north wall of the New Metropolis church in the city. Velkov (1969), 214. The epigraphic evidence for this is published, together with a French translation, by Velkov, ibid, 215-6, nos 40 and 41. It is reconsidered by Oikonomides (1981, 1984 & 1985), from which the Greek text quoted is taken.

[472] "This city, destroyed by the hands of the heathen,
has been rebuilt from its foundations by the rulers,
Basil and Leo, together with Alexander,
the emperors of the Romans crowned by God"; Oikonomides (1985), 271.

[473] Ibid, 273.

[474] Dimitrov (1992), 39.

work on fortifications elsewhere in the empire, such as the rebuilding of Nikaia and the fortifications at Ankara, so it seems likely he would do so at Mesembria.[475]

Which churches were rebuilt in this period? It has been argued that the Old Metropolis and the Virgin Eleusa, and possibly the church north of the tower, may have been the ones to receive attention.[476] These were the two biggest churches and, judging by what remains of the former now, were likely to have survived in a repairable state. The Old Metropolis in particular would be representative of local prestige and the re-Christianisation of the city. There are certainly two periods of construction visible in the Old Metropolis identifiable by brick size and mortar bed size.[477] By now changes had occurred in the performance of the liturgy necessitating the presence of a tripartite bema.[478] Niches appear to have been inserted in the apse of the Old Metropolis to accommodate such changes. The changes in the masonry forming and surrounding them, particularly the loss of the brick band and irregularity in courses, suggest they are of a later age than the carefully laid *opus mixtum* of the lower courses (figs 42 & 43).[479]

Khan Boris accepted Christianity in or around 864 although, as the revolt of the Boyars in 889 showed, it was not a conversion wholeheartedly and universally

[475] Grégoire, "Michael III", 327ff. Ostrogorsky (1940), 227.
[476] Venedikov (1969b), 159. Dufrenne (1981), 361. Ćurčić reports that scholarly opinion seems "inclined to accept a tenth- (or eleventh-) century date" for substantial modifications. Ćurčić (2010), 309. Since there was another period of Bulgar possession (894-971) a further programme of rebuilding may well have occurred after 971 but there must have been a need to repair after the recovery from the pagan Bulgars reflected in the above quoted inscription eveidence.
[477] And mortar type. Bojadžiev (1962), 323-4. Venedikov (1969b), 159.
[478] Wybrew (1996), 108-128. The changes date at least from the time of the *Codex Barberini* (800) which revealed the actions of the clergy reserved for each of the spaces.
[479] Bojadžiev (1962), 324.

Figure 42.

Mesembria. Old Metropolis. Nave from the west.

Figure 43.

Mesembria. Old Metropolis. Apse detail.

accepted.[480] It is likely that church buildings begin to be erected soon thereafter in Bulgar territory, albeit perhaps sporadically and concentrated at or near the capital at least until the opposition of the Boyars was finally overcome ca. 892/3. Building is likely to have commenced in earnest throughout the Bulgar lands on the accession of Symeon and the adoption of Slavonic as the official language for both church and state in 893.[481]

In 895 Symeon retook Mesembria and the border reverted to the River Sredecka and the border post to Debeltos. In the vicinty of Debeltos foundations have been uncovered of a cross domed church close by to which there were found Byzantine and Bulgar seals for 852 – 889.[482]

The correspondence of Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos with Symeon, between the years 912/3 and 925, shows that Debeltos and Mesembria were both places of diplomatic activity. Mesembria was clearly not only a functioning town but was a suitable venue for high level diplomatic activity containing all appropriate facilities and support structures.[483]

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[480] Browning (1975), 146-158.
[481] Ibid, 158.
[482] Dimitrov (1992), 40. Around 904 the border may even have been pushed much further south to Medeia (modern Midye).[482] As a result of the terms of the peace treaty of 927 it certainly seems Debeltos and the Black Sea coast as far south as Medeia were in Bulgar hands. Dimitrov (1992), 43. This assertion is made on the basis of a reading of the sources as well as some archaeological finds in Nessebar and Sozopol. In his view this remained the case until the recapture of the area for Byzantium by Nikephorus Phokas in 967.
[483] E.g. NCP, *Letters*, 6 (Symeon's ambassador at Debeltos), 14 (meeting at Mesembria suggested). Also see Theo. Cont. 412 (peace negotiations in 927). Seals of a *kleisourarch* of Mesembria dated to 864-913 and 917 have been found in Preslav, revealing the role of Mesmbria in Byzantine-Bulgar diplomatic activity. Jordanov (2003), 119-121. A *kleisourarch* was a commander of a Byzantine frontier distrct subordinate to *a strategos*. Whittow (1996), 316.

The continuing importance of Mesembria as a trading destination during the second period of Bulgar possession is revealed in the *DAI*. It is one of the regular ports of call of the annual Rus' passage from the Dnieper rapids to Constantinople.[484] The same entry reveals that, at Mesembria, the waters were safe and secure for traders from there to Constantinople.[485] Not only were the trading links between Bulgaria and the empire preserved, they were firmly established and peaceable.

In about 970 Mesembria returned to Byzantine hands but by this time it had been, for upwards of seventy-six years, a constituent part of a highly energetic and assertive Orthodox Christian power whose leader, for much of that time, had aspirations to supplant the emperor and place himself on the Byzantine throne.[486] Symeon was completely imbued with Byzantine culture, having received religious and secular education in the court at Constantinople, and he enthusiastically endorsed and encouraged the adaption of Byzantine culture to the needs of the Bulgars.[487] Bulgaria, and most particularly Mesembria, did not cease to be linked to Byzantine influence that flowed through trade, diplomacy and a faith centred on Constantinople.[488] This is revealed in the ecclesiastical architecture as we shall see.

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[484] *DAI*, 9/ 101-104.
[485] The security of the coastal waters was likely the result of the patrols of the Byzantine navy a detachment of which may well have been stationed permanently at or near Debeltos as evidenced by a seal of the tenth century of an *archon* of Debeltos. Ahrweiler was of the view that this official undertook the duties formerly of the *archon* of Bulgaria known from ninth-century seals. It is possible that he was the head of a section of the imperial fleet responsible for surveillance of the coastline and held the rank of *komes*. The coastal region for which he had responsibility included that offshore from territory no longer part of the empire. It is seen as evidence of the existence of officials known as archons but who are directly responsible to the capital and not *strategoi* of themes to which they are nominally attached and who have particular maritime responsibility in zones of exceptional strategic importance, adjacent to borders or other troublesome areas. Ahrweiler (1966), 87-9.
[486] NCP, *Letters*, 18, 19, 21, 27.
[487] Obolensky (1971), 142-144. Browning (1975), 160-1.
[488] Ibid, 144.

3. The ninth- and tenth-century monuments of Mesembria.

3.1. The walls.

A close examination of the wall has been made by Venedikov.[489] He identified different periods of construction and repair from antique to that typical of late medieval construction but it has not been possible to precisely date the various stages particularly those pertaining to the medieval periods. Eight different masonry types have been identified in the walls and he has been successful in establishing a very general pattern of relative dating.[490] The earliest forms date to the Roman era and involved the re-use of earlier Hellenistic masonry. The characteristic form was of regular *opus mixtum* of alternating coursed stone and five bands of brick. Post-Roman era work on the walls also involved similar masonry but differentiable through the irregularity of the stone bands. Such later forms also utilised both pure brick and also masonry predominantly in stone. A variety of sub-categories of this form were identified, differentiated by stone size, the presence of brick fragments and extent of material mix.

Venedikov established a relative dating by comparison with dateable and comparable forms elsewhere such as the walls of Nikaia built under Michael III that involved sections of pure brick or faced with brick in regular courses.[491] He also made a stylistic comparison between the square towers in Mesembria and those of other

[489] Venedikov (1969a) and Venedikov (1969b).
[490] Venedikov (1969b), 128-9 for a summary of the masonry types.
[491] Venedikov (1969b), 143.

Byzantine cities such as Ankara that, again, can be dated with some confidence to the seventh and eighth centuries.[492]

Venedikov associated some isolated and partial areas of demolition in the curtain walls with damage caused by siege engines and this is directly referable to the siege by Krum in 813.[493] The repair work done to those areas is, presuming that the walls were repaired as soon as possible, indicative of the masonry of the ninth century. That work was in *opus mixtum*, copying the Roman forms using five bands of brick. Some of the repair has regular courses of stone hardly differing from the Roman era work but other areas have irregularly uncoursed block work and fragments of spoil.[494] Part of the west wall was rebuilt wholly in brick. Furthermore there is evidence, through the dissemination (including to Mesembria) of bricks with sixth-century stamps, that there was shipment of building material from the capital to other centres in the same period to aid the process of defensive repairs. Similarly stamped fragmentary bricks have also been uncovered at the site of the church of the Virgin Eleusa, repaired, as has been argued, immediately after the recovery of the city by Basil I.[495]

Venedikov deduced that the western wall had undergone further rebuilding and that the manner, care and extent of it suggested to him that it did not arise from military assaults but was preparatory to deliberate, peace-time, refurbishment, this time in mixed uncoursed stone.[496] The insertion, following that rebuilding, of a new entrance in the wall further suggested a period of peace. He considered that such a period was

[492] Venedikov (1969a), 158.
[493] Venedikov (1969a), 159.
[494] Ibid, 159-160.
[495] Bardill (2004), 41-2.
[496] Venedikov (1969a), 160-161.

that following the Byzantine recovery of the city at the close of the tenth century and more particularly with renovations sponsored by Constantine X and Eudokia during the second half of the eleventh century.[497]

The relative dating is heavily dependant upon dateable inscriptions created at the behest of Byzantine imperial authorities after recovery of the city and its region and which signposted that re-establishment of that authority.[498] The weaknesses of the argument are clear. Despite the Bulgars having been in occupation of the city for extensive periods the possibility of Bulgar construction activity is ignored. While Bulgar renovation in Mesembria is not recorded in our sources, the building work in Pliska, Preslav and Kastoria reveals the extent of such activity throughout the ninth and tenth centuries.[499]

Following Krum's capture of the city it is virtually inconceivable that he would not have promptly attended to repairs to the fortifications as well as other parts of the important fabric of the city damaged in the siege. The period of Bulgar rule between 894 and 971 qualifies as a time of peace of the type referred to above (p. 133), when there was refurbishment of part of the curtain wall and the insertion of the new entrance door. Mesembria and the eastern part of the Bulgar state may also have suffered damage at the hands of the Magyars and/or the Rus' from the 940s to the

[497] This work is referred to in an inscription. Velkov (1969), 217-9, no. 43. I will consider it further in connection with the discussion of the churches. See pp. 182-3
[498] Velkov (1969), 214, no. 40 (Basil and his sons) and 217, no. 43 (Constantine and Eudokia).
[499] Mijatev (1974) catalogues and considers Bulgar building. See Epstein (1980) for churches erected in Kastoria whilst that town was part of the Bulgar state in the ninth and tenth centuries. These buildings will receive closer consideration later in the discussions of the Mesembria churches.

970s[500] and necessitating repairs to the fortifications more urgently than those performed by Constantine X in the mid-eleventh century.

It is reasonable to suppose that the various forms of masonry detected in the walls arose, from 812 to 970, out of a number of historical events that impacted on the city and not merely those recorded by imperial authorities and Theophanes. The masonry techniques of stone and mixed stone and fragmentary brick are to be found at both Bulgar and Byzantine sites. Beyond revealing a very broad and general relative sequence the walls are silent. In the absence of inscriptions more cultural information is needed and that can often be provided by monuments to which I shall now turn.

3.2. The churches

There are two structures in Mesembria that have been associated with the period of the ninth to the beginning of the eleventh centuries.

3.2.1. St John the Baptist (fig 3 [c])

This church is, in ground plan, a cross-in-square, with a central bay supported on four masonry piers, the cross arms and the corner bays all barrel vaulted. The ground plan is rectangular measuring 13m by 10m. At the east the building terminates in a triple apsed bema without any forechoir. The apses are half-round, centred on the inner wall. The central apse is about twice the diameter of those of the pastophories

[500] This aspect will be more closely considered below, pp. 176-8.

(1.30m/1.15m and 2.8m). The central aisle is about twice the width (3.4m) of the side aisles (1.8m).[501]

In exterior elevation (figs 44 & 45) the four barrel vaults are clearly revealed. The flat dome is lifted on a high circular drum. The barrel vaulting seems to be revealed by its projection from the façade walls creating four blind arches on each elevation.
The arches on the north, south and west walls do not, however, correspond with the vaulting of the cross arms. The arches of the south flank wall are offset in a westerly direction and do not mirror the position of their counterparts on the north wall (fig. 3[c]).

Although the ground plan creates a quincunx, the heaviness and bulk of the central supporting piers (about ¾ m long) create a significant visual barrier between the nave and the side aisles at the east and west ends accessible only through narrow (0.75 m wide) squat entrances (fig. 46). The visual communication is, in this respect, more limited than that which is experienced in, for example, the Constantinopolitan cross-in-square churches of Constantine Lips and the Myrelaion where the central bay rest on narrow columns. Such characteristics of churches in Bulgar lands have been suggested as one (amongst others) possible dating criteria.[502]

External display, at first sight, seems lacking in the building. The masonry generally is of a broad mix of roughly squared stone, uncoursed (except on corner quoins, pilasters and door apertures) and mixed with brick fragments with heavy applications of mortar. It is this characteristic which has led some to suggest that the whole of the

[501] The measurements and observations referred to here and subsequently are mine unless otherwise acknowledged.
[502] Krautheimer (1986), 312.

Figure 44.

Mesembria. St. John from the southeast.

Figure 45.

Mesembria. St. John from the southwest.

Figure 46.

Mesembria. St. John. Inner wall piers.

Figure 47.

Mesembria. St. John. Blind arch.

church was rendered in plaster.[503] A close inspection, however, reveals that the builder did concern himself with external decoration and, moreover, through two distinct forms.

(a) Façade articulation.

The blind arches suggest the underlying support structure but, as noted above, do not align with them. They are elements purely applied to create interest in the facades, that is for aesthetic purposes.[504] Furthermore, complexity has been built into the arch zone. A projecting string course of brick follows the extrados of the arch creating hoods (fig. 47). This feature is replicated in the uppermost section of the drum where a series of semi-circular blind arches are arranged around the drum springing at the level of the roof line and creating a series of dormers. The extrados of the arch of each is emphasised again by a projecting cornice of bricks. The spandrels and the façade above the arches project beyond them and are supported on brick corbelling at the springing level (fig. 48). This additional detailing in the drum led Rachénov to consider the possibility that it had been built at a later date than the rest of the church.[505] There is nothing in the masonry that would support that view and the similarity of form between the arches in the drum and those of the cross vaults suggests otherwise.[506]

[503] Rachénov (1932), 98. Ćurčić takes the same view, adding that possibly the plaster was then presented "in emulation of building techniques" - presumably meaning having incised lines suggesting ashlar. Ćurčić (2010), 332. There is no evidence to support that supposition.
[504] Mijatev (1974), 101.
[505] Rachénov (1932), 98.
[506] Săsălov noted that the arches of the drum were not set out exactly symmetrically. The north and south arches coincide with the main axes of the church but the others are set out somewhat irregularly.[506] This in part had led him to consider that the function of the thickening of the walls here was also to facilitate water run off. Săsălov (1980), 191 and 199.

Figure 48.

Mesembria. St. John. Drum.

Figure 49.

Mesembria. St John. West façade.

Further decorative elements appear in the drum. The drum itself is an element of display being dramatically lofty at 2.46 m high.[507] It is pierced, in its lower register, with four windows arranged along the main axes. Between them are alternating niches (aping the form of the windows) and semi-circular blind arches level with, and identical in form to, the arches of the windows. It is to be noted that these elements have been placed in a highly visible position on a structural element of great importance itself, that is, the support of the dome. It will be seen later that the drum of late ninth- and tenth-century churches in many cases received greater levels of embellishment than the lower registers. With the growth in importance of external display and the clear focal point represented by the drum, such a development is quite explicable.

(b) Façade decoration.

At the west the tympana below the arches of three entrances are filled with brick patterning (fig. 49). Above the central door the patterning comprises six rows of chevrons placed over each other creating a repeating diamond or reticulate pattern. Above the side door the patterning is less clear although the two appear to have been identical in arrangement. The chevron motif is repeated but is interrupted by horizontally and vertically aligned bricks. The intention has been to fill the tympanum cavity with patterns that would stand out from the white mortar in which the red bricks are set. The arches themselves have been also given a decorative treatment. They are composed of alternating stone voussoirs and groups of three to five bricks

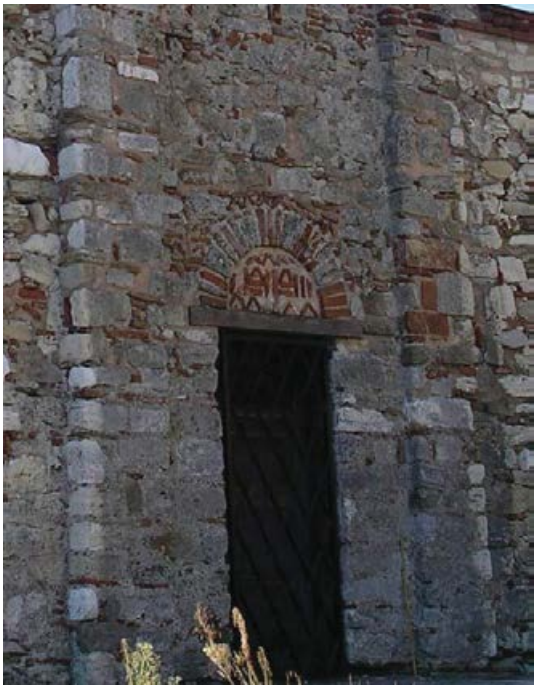
[507] Săsălov (1980), 194.

creating a decorative and colourific effect and suggestive of a complete stone voussoir arch.

Over the lintel of the north door is a similar arrangement to that over the western side doors (fig. 50). The chevron motif is repeated in fragmentary form over the back of the arch and above that is a brief string course in brick. Only in the main west door tympanum was the chevron motif repeated consistently. Perhaps it was intended that the main door would thereby have emphasis. The north wall also contains short sections of zigzag patterns.

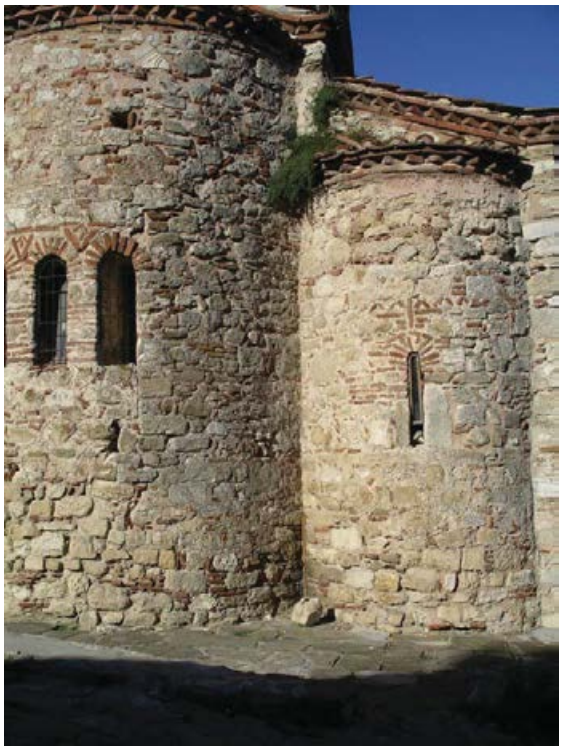
At the east further brick decoration is inserted around the window apertures on the apses (fig. 51). Above the arches of the triple windows of the central apse a brief string course of brick is set that curves down over the northern window to its springing level (one assumes that at some stage it extended similarly over its southern counterpart). The spandrels between the brick arches are filled with brick patternings repeating the chevron motif. The work has not been performed with any great finesse but it is certainly deliberate and solely decorative. Over the north apse window there is, again, a string course following the extrados of the arch. Above that there is a grouping of bricks, three of which form a cruciform. Above the horizontal cross arms are four inverted chevrons and below the cross arms are two pairs of horizontal bricks. There is no visible evidence of any decorative brickwork over the diaconicon window although it is difficult to see why it should have been omitted from treatment and may have been lost at some point through rebuilding or repair. The two brick piers dividing the windows of the central apse are composed of alternate courses of stone and three courses of brick repeating the motif in the arches of the western doors.

Figure 50.



Mesembria. St. John. North door lunette.

Figure 51.



Mesembria. St. John. Apses.

The spandrels of the arches in the drum are filled with horizontal courses of brick edged by a curved brick border following the intrados of the arches.

In this structure, therefore, there has not only been some effort expended on articulation of facades but also on the application, and in important positions, of brick ornament. Great attention has been given to the drum articulation and to decorative features on its surface. Was this work then covered as has been suggested? While the application of plaster would not have obliterated the articulation of the facades or the projection of the hoods over the drum arches it would have completely hidden the brick pedimental arches of the windows and doors and the decorative work in the tympana. Plaster work might have left the decorative elements exposed. It is difficult to comprehend why trouble would be taken to apply decorative elements for them then to be hidden.

In addition, the mixed brick and stone voussoir arches are to be regularly found as a repeating motif in the late Byzantine churches of Mesembria such as Christ Pantokrator (thirteenth to fourteenth century) and the Church of the Archangels (thirteenth to fifteenth century) as well as St John Aleiturgitos (fourteenth century) (figs 52 & 53). Brick patternings filling lunettes are also to be found in St John Aleiturgitos (fig. 54).[508] In all of these later churches the elements noted in St John the Baptist were clearly intended for permanent external display. They became part of a local repertoire of motifs. They could not have been copied from earlier churches unless they had been on permanent display. It is reasonable therefore to argue that the elements of display at St John the Baptist were not hidden by plaster.

[508] See also Hommaire de Hell (1859), Plate10 for a detailed drawing of the façade of St. John Aleiturgitos and the variety of brick patterns in the lunettes.

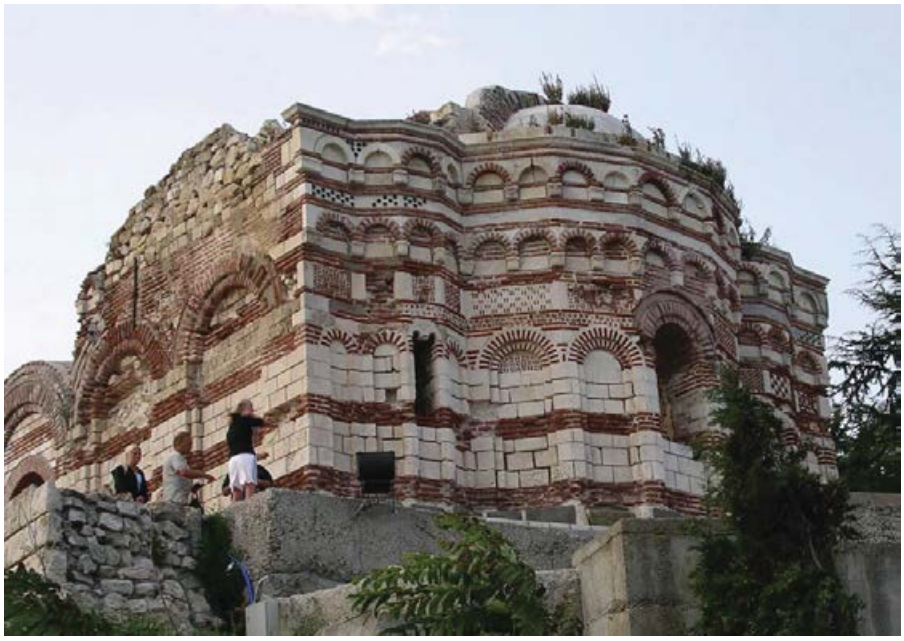
Figure 52.

Mesembria. Christ Pantocrator.

Figure 53.

Mesembria. Church of the Archangels.

Figure 54.



Mesembria. St John Aleiturgitos.

Figure 55.

Mesembria. St Stephen. Re-used column and capitals.

3.2.2 .St Stephen (or the New Metropolis) (fig. 3[d]).

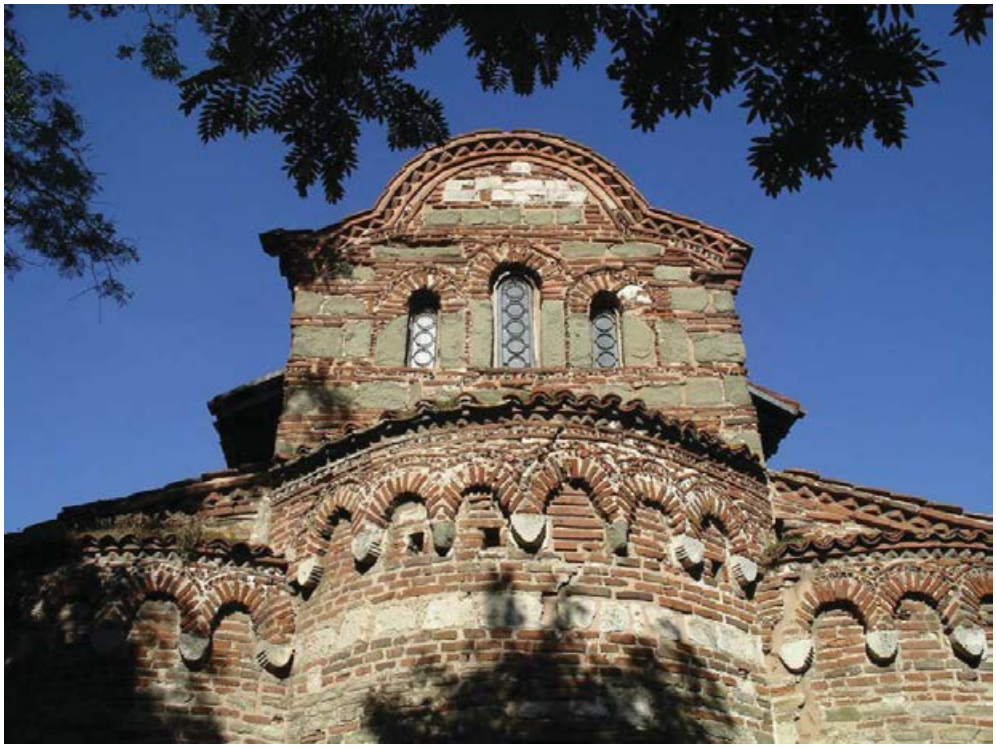
The ground plan of this church appears similar in size and layout to that of St John the Baptist, being rectangular, 12.10 m (inclusive of the extended central apse) by 9.5 m. It terminates in a triple apsed bema and the internal space is divided into three aisles. The central apse is not fully semi-circular but those of the pastophoria are. The diameter of the central apse (about 3m) is roughly twice the diameter of its neighbours (1.65m). The central apse appears to have a single step synthronon.[509] The ground plan reveals an appended narthex but the lack of masonry bond indicates this was a later addition (fig. 57).

The internal space is divided into three aisles by way of longitudinal walls which open up, within the nave, through pairs of lateral arches each about 2.7m wide, each pair resting on a shared marble column. The wall pier at the east is pierced by a narrow opening enabling the elements of the sanctuary to communicate with each other. The nave columns are spoils (there are a number of marble spoils in the grounds recovered from the site). The columns are seated upon reused Corinthian capitals (fig 55).

The ground floor plan suggests, at first sight, some cross-in-square arrangement with a four point support for a dome. In this the ground plans of St Stephen and St John look deceptively similar. St. Stephen is, however, not such a structure. It is basilical with the walls dividing the naves rising above the side aisles to form a clerestory, each face of which is pierced by three round arched windows. The pitch of the roof is hidden, at both east and west elevation behind yoke shaped gables with brick kneelers

[509] I was unable to verify this by personal inspection because of barriers and obstructions and I rely for this information on Rachénov (1932), 15 who recorded its presence in 1932.

Figure 56.



Mesembria. St. Stephen. East façade gable end.

Figure 57.

Mesembria. St. Stephen. North façade from northeast.

(fig 56). Three windows, also with rounded arches, pierce the eastern gable wall. The western gable rests on two shallow clasping pilasters. Here at the west, beneath the gable cornice a rounded brick arch rests on the pilasters creating a blind arch façade within which is set a triple window capped by two half round and central semi-circular brick arches.[510] Single lengths of stone set on end act as mullions.

At ground floor level the north and south facades are divided by four shallow rectangular pilasters extending to roof level, one at each extremity of the wall and the other two framing entrances (figs 57 & 58). Some later rebuilding has occurred at the western end of the south wall as evident from the masonry (fig. 57). The central and prothesis apses have single window apertures but none appear on the diaconicon apse. The original form of the west facade is hidden behind the later extension but there appears to have been, originally, a single entrance and no narthex.[511]

Masonry differences evident in the walls point to a minimum of three building phases but the bulk of the building to the east of the later "narthex" addition, including the gables, has consistently similar masonry on all facades and represents the original construction. Some repair appears to have been undertaken to the lower register of the prothesis apse.[512]

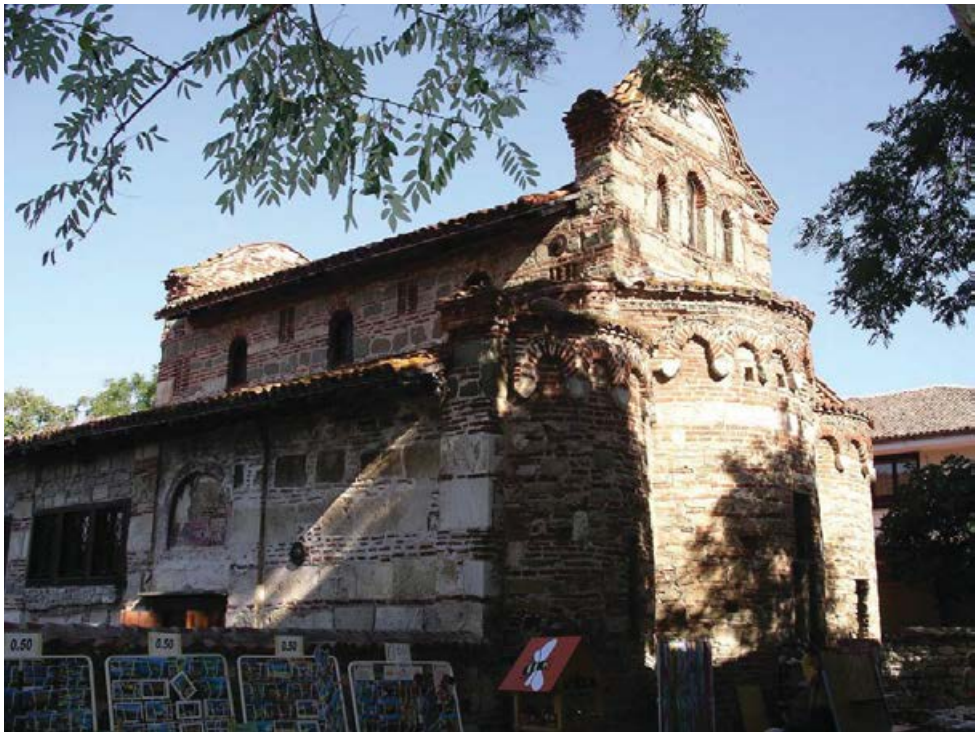
As in St John, the pilasters on the north and south facades do not correspond with internal support elements. Furthermore the pair round the door on the south façade is wider than the corresponding pair on the north wall. The lack of correspondence

[510] It is unclear whether this was a true window originally. It is presently filled with masonry but of the same type as that of the remainder of the church.
[511] Rachénov (1932), 17.
[512] Săsălov (1981), 345.

Figure 58.

Mesembria. St. Stephen. South façade from the south.

Figure 59.



Mesembria. St. Stephen from the southeast.

suggests that the purpose of the pilasters was not for the strengthening of walls for the supporting of vaulting. It would appear that both side aisles and the central nave had wooden roofs although the roof over the nave may well have been higher than it presently is.[513]

The masonry of the church is of courses of brick and stone. There is no consistency in the composition of the brick courses which can vary between one and four levels with a variety often within each band (fig. 59). The stonework is roughly squared. Brick fragments are inserted to level up the stone courses. The mortar courses are the thickness of the bricks. The stone is of a mixture of white and grey limestone. Consistency is generally maintained in the choice of colour for each course. Generally, however, there is a distinct lack of finesse in the laying of the courses.

Notwithstanding the above there are numerous elements of external display and these are more pronounced and obvious than in St John. In many respects there are also of different type. As in St John the Baptist the elements can be categorised between those relating to or suggesting structure and others purely ornamental. A representative of a third group can also be discerned.

(a) Façade articulation.

In this group are the pilasters that divide the north and south ground floor facades and also enliven clerestory walls. There are other elements. A saw tooth cornice crowns both gables, the eastern walls of the side aisles and the apses. It is unclear whether

[513] Săsălov (1981), 346. Rachénov (1932), 23-24.

such cornicing was applied to the north and south walls. All the apertures, doors and windows, have brick arches.

The most striking articulation is reserved for the east and west façades. The gables, both east and west, are of a form which appears unique in middle Byzantine architecture. The apses are adorned with corbel tables supporting continuous blind arcades around the upper registers of the apse curves. The corbels are all of white limestone with plain facades and grooved sides. The arches, in common with those of the apertures, are all in brick (fig. 60). This particular feature reappears in a highly developed form in the 14th -century church of St John Aleiturgitos (fig. 54). Certainly nothing resembling them appears elsewhere in later Mesembrian churches even though many other aspects of display both from this church and St John do find their way into the later building and were clearly sources of inspiration.

There is a further example of external articulation which occurs in this church. On the southern clerestory wall there are four rectangular blind niches resembling window apertures and indeed the dimensions are virtually identical to those of the true windows without the arches. Two of these are set either side of the true windows, just below the eaves, and the other two at each end of the wall just above the side aisle roof. All four are of the same design, containing three vertical colonnettes (false mullions?) of brick of alternating triangular and rounded cross section (fig. 61). Their purpose can be no more than to enliven the wall. They appear only on the south wall. Their form is, seemingly, unique. Their relatively small size emphasises the banded effect of the brick and mortar. They are highly decorative.

Figure 60.

Mesembria. St. Stephen. Apse detail.

Figure 61.

Mesembria. St Stephen. Niche on clerestory.

(b) Façade decoration

The most visible and distinctive form of façade decoration is reserved for the eastern elevation. Above the archivolts of the arcading on the apses there is embellishment in the form of bands of green and red glazed pot inserts of rounded and quatrefoil shape (these are the end profiles of items inserted lengthwise into the masonry[514]) (fig. 60). There are two courses of these over the arcade on the main apse and one on the side apses. On the side apses the spandrels are filled with more of these pots. On the main apse a string course of the same is inserted between two rows of bricks immediately below the saw tooth cornice. Similar inserts are placed around the window apertures of the gable and, as with the apse, immediately below the cornice between two courses of brick. The western gable does not appear to have been similarly adorned.

The use of glazed pottery inserts is, once again, a motif repeated and developed to a significant degree in later building in Mesembria.[515] As with much else the application of these glazed inserts had been done without great finesse or care. It is clear that the individual motifs or elements mattered less than the overall decorative effect. Added to that is the colour contrast between the white/grey limestone blocks and the red of the bricks, particularly noticeable on the north and south facades. Once again this is an aspect repeated and developed in later churches in Mesembria such as St John Aleiturgitos, the Archangels and Christ Pantokrator (figs 52, 53 & 54).

(c) Supernatural reinforcement

[514] Săsălov (1981), 349. See Hommaire de Hell (1859), Plate 11 for drawings of 6 main forms of the glazed pots embellishing the Mesembrian churches.
[515] Săsălov says that, although the motif also appears in the fourteenth century in Constantinople, Greece and Serbia, only the cross form type was used and the execution differs. He asserts that this is a peculiar invention and development of Bulgarian architecture. Săsălov (1981), 359.

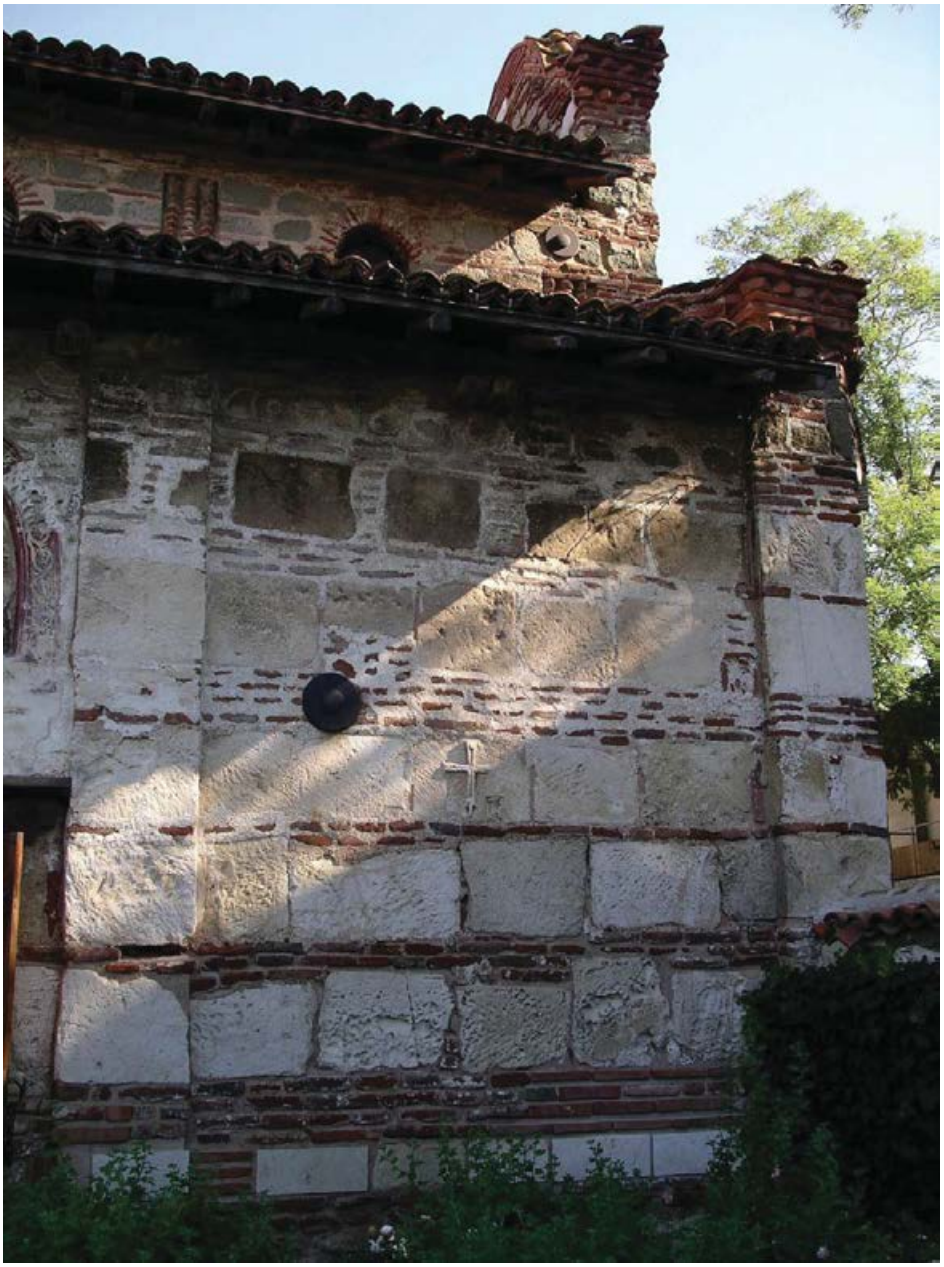
The third additional motif is the single sculpted cross on the south façade, midway between the two eastern pilasters and level with the lintel of the existing door (fig. 62). It is clearly a deliberate placement at a level to be seen by all who approached the church.

This is not mere decoration. Nor does the cross signpost an entrance to the church or emphasise a particularly important part of it. It has been inserted to perform a role of supernatural structural reinforcement. The sculpted cross on the south façade of the Fatih Camii church in Amastris is analogous both in placement (south façade) and positioning (legible).

The cross, clearly, has a particular significance to a Christian as a symbol of the Passion and an emblem of the faith. From an early time it was also seen as an apotropaic device. The particular reverence reserved for the cross was the subject of legislative decrees as early as the start of the fifth century.[516] The unadorned cross was seen as the image of God's power (in defeating death) and then, by extension, it was seen as itself having power; humankind is saved directly through it.[517] By reason of that the sign of the cross was permitted, by patristic authority, to be affixed on all non-floor surfaces.[518] Indeed it was argued by St. John Chrysostom that only the cross should be seen as having apotropaic properties because there could be no ambiguity in its effect.[519] During the iconoclast periods the cross was the only permitted image but

[516] The Edict of Theodosius II (427) enjoined all to be diligent in preserving the dignity of the faith by not carving the crucifix on the ground or creating cruciform paving upon pain of severe punishment. *Cod. Just. I, viii*, trans, Mango (1972), 36. This edict was restated in the canons of the Quinisext Council, 692, Mansi, XI, 976, Canon 73.
[517] St. Nilus of Sinai, *Letter to Prefect Olympiodorus*, PG 79, 577-80; trans. Mango (1972), 33.
[518] Epiphanius of Salamis, *Letter to the Emperor Theodosius*, trans. Mango (1972), 42.
[519] *In epistolam I ad Corinthios homilia XII*, 7; PG 61, col. 105-6; *In epistolam ad Colossenses cap. III homilia VIII*, 5; PG 62, col. 358. Maguire (1996), 135.

Figure 62.



Mesembria. St. Stephen. Cross on south façade.

both iconoclasts and iconophiles accepted the protective power of the crucifix whether made as amulets or necklaces, the phylacteries, or as adornment to buildings.[520]

The lintel over the church entrance was often adorned with a cross.[521] Doors are liminal spaces and those of churches take on a particular relevance as the point where one leaves the earthly realm to be in the presence of the holy.[522] The cross on the lintel would signify that transitional space as was seen at Kilise Mescidi in Amastris (p. 94). Since the sanctuary is the exclusive province of the clergy, templon screen and its parapet walls are also liminal and were also adorned with crosses. The carving on the walls at St Stephen and on the Fatih Camii does not signify a zone of transfer. Such carved crosses are also found in middle Byzantine defensive walls in Anatolia.[523] Where they occur, these carvings are not parts of patterns but are inserted as isolated forms. Their function appears to be to "reinforce" the man-made structure. For defensive walls that is quite explicable. The application of such protective crosses to walls of churches seems a rarity until the middle Byzantine period, after which it is a frequent motif in external display patterns, often in a stylised form. The apparent need to provide the church fabric with additional protection seems to indicate that a change has occurred in how the building itself is understood. No longer is just the interior and the ceremonies therein of importance. The fabric of the building, its walls

[520] Nikephoros, *Antirrh*. III, 36; PG 100, 433 trans Mango (1972), 176.
[521] There is evidence that this was customary by the time of Justinian (527-65). The description of St. Sergios at Gaza makes reference to the central entrance arch to the church bearing a centrally placed "symbol of the Saviour's Passion". Choricius, *Laudatio Marciani* I, 17, trans. Mango (1972), 60.
[522] Brubaker (2010), 59.
[523] Barnes and Whittow (1994), 198. The use of the carved cross in this fashion on defensive walls can also be traced back to the sixth century. The monastery at Mt. Sinai is surrounded by massive granite walls. The south wall is embellished with a number of individual relief crosses all at or below eye level all to add to the very real practical defensive measures.

and form are of value and in need of the prophylactic power of the cross. The exterior of the church building itself is being presented as a bulwark.[524]

3.3. The dating of the churches

3.3.1. St John the Baptist

The dating of St John is unresolved. The difficulty facing scholars has been where to place the structure in the differing patterns of developments seen to be taking place on the Balkan peninsula, southern Greece and the great cities of Thessaloniki and Constantinople together with the added complexity associated with the question of independent developments in the newly Christianised Bulgaria.

Krautheimer considered the church to be the product of the late tenth or early eleventh century although he linked certain aspects of it, such as the heavy piers and low internal arches, with late ninth-century structures such as St Sophia at Ohrid and the Panaghia at Skripou.[525] The vaulting of the cross arms in the latter is clearly projected to the exterior, as in St John, and, further, the dome in both is borne on wall piers. The comparisons can only be taken so far. There are differences in both the form and application of decorative display. The saw-tooth string courses on the Panaghia curve over the apertures on the apses and drum whereas at St. John they are only at cornice

[524] How the church building had become perceived in the middle Byzantine period will be further addressed below, pp. 275-7.
[525] Krautheimer (1986), 313-5. Dated by inscription to 873/4 which identifies the donor as a *protospatharios*, one Leo. See Papalexandrou (2007), 171 for text and translation. See also Ćurčić (2010), 316-8 for a recent assessment of the building in the context of its place in ninth- and tenth-century Byzantine building. He considers that the projecting stone and brick string courses around the building raise the possibility that it was plastered and/or was embellished with courses of tiles in diaper patterns on the upper part apses as on the church at Zourtsa; ibid and p. 310 for a discussion of the latter.

level. Apertures and niches at St. John are enhanced by brick arches and, in the drum, by brick modelling. Those differences suggest differing build cultures for each structure.

The Panaghia is also noteworthy for the four panels with inscriptions placed on ground floor (i.e. legible) registers of the east, west and north facades.[526] Its apse also contains a decorative carved plaque comprising, in flat relief, roundels enclosing foliate and floral motifs.[527] Such types of feature are absent from St John. Furthermore the forms of the triple apses differ markedly. In the Panaghia the central apse projects strongly in a full semi-circle and is separated from the neighbouring apses by short stretches of wall. As for St. Sophia at Ochrid, the plain, unarticulated façades and polygonal central apse do not relate readily to what is found at St John. The fully developed cloisonné brickwork, particularly evident at the east, also significantly differentiates it from St John and dates it to the eleventh century.[528]

Dufrenne considered whether the church was the product of the second period of Bulgar occupation of the city (894 – 971) but was not convinced it was. She linked St. John with cross-in-square churches being built in Greece in the late tenth to the eleventh centuries on the basis of plans and proportions, the rounded apses, the height of the drum and the proportions of the masonry. She agreed with Orlandos that the

[526] For a recent discussion of these see Papalexandrou (2001), 259-283.
[527] Larger roundels enclose flat reliefs of animals, lions, deer and boar; quarry for hunts.The style and execution recalls, as Krautheimer observes, Sassanian designs but, whatever may have been the ultimate source of inspiration, such elements can be readily detected in eighth- and ninth-century textiles associated with Constantinopolitan production and in some Italo-Byzantine marble sculpture of the same era. Beckwith (1979), 172-175. An example would be that on a marble screen, dated to the eighth to the ninth centuries. Huyghe (1968), 87.Krautheimer (1986), 316.
[528] Both reconstruction and date of St Sophia, Ochrid are in doubt and could be anywhere from the late ninth to the mid-eleventh centuries: Krautheimer (1986), 312. Ćurčić (2010), 398-9. He considers the church in its present form to have been the product of the post-1018 reconstruction after reconquest although having a much longer history.

structure was to be associated with the Virgin Panaxiotissa (Dormitian of the Virgin) in Gavrolimni in south-west Greece, dated to the last quarter of the tenth century.[529]

There are certainly a number of similarities that suggest a general relationship between those two structures. These are the tall round drum (to which, in both churches, significant decorative attention has been given), the conical dome roof, the rounded apses centred upon the inner face of the east wall, the mixed masonry of brick and stone in ample amounts of mortar and the inner four point support of masonry piers, the last mentioned argued to be a non-Constantinopolitan feature.[530]

Notwithstanding this there are some distinct dissimilarities between the two structures and, indeed between St. John and Greek churches generally.

Although, as noted above, the drum in the Panaxiotissa received decorative attention, the mode of elaboration differs. In the Panaxiotissa the drum decoration comprises bands of brick surface ornament, one with a repeating rhomboid or lozenge pattern and the other, the upper, a similarly repeating "v" or chevron.[531] Both patterns are set on recessed fields and have been very competently executed.[532] Whilst it is to be noted that the use of chevron and lozenge motifs in façade decoration is a commonality between the two structures the manner, the extent and placement of the

[529] Dufrenne (1981), 362-3. Vokotopoulos also dated this church to the tenth century. Vokotopoulos (1989), 204. For ground plan and elevation form see ibid, p. 205. Ćurčić (2010), 331 supports that dating.
[530] Vokotopoulos (1989), 190.
[531] For an image of the drum see Ćurčić (2010), 330, fig.356.
[532] The level of sophistication evident in the construction including the external display elements also seems to differentiate the Panaxiotissa from St. John with the rough masonry and rudely executed brick patterns in the facades. The articulation in the drum at St. John is, however, well executed. It is the type of display that separates the two structures.

motifs differs markedly between them.[533] The brick façade decoration at St. John appears only above and around apertures and not on the drum where, as already noted, brick is used to model rather than decorate the surface. Another differentiating factor is in the use of saw tooth bands. They were applied in the Panaxiotissa to enliven facades and to emphasise arches over windows and doors. The facades were otherwise unarticulated and plain, unlike those at St. John.

There are other aspects that differentiate St John from other building in the Balkan peninsula, including the Panaxiotissa. As with the Panaghia at Skripou, its apses and those of others of its "group" are separated from each other by small sections of wall. That suggests that different building teams were at work utilising two different types of formulae for the east end.[534] Furthermore the masonry of the Panaxiotissa, unlike that of St. John, is of well formed stonework laid, together with brick, reasonably carefully to courses.[535]

Epstein has also noted a seeming affinity between the tall drum of St John and that of the Kastorian church of the Koubelidiki datable by her, on the basis of both external surface embellishment and an examination of internal frescoes, to the late ninth or early tenth century.[536] Once again the differences between this structure and St. John are telling. The facades and the drum of the Koubelidiki are fully ornamented with cloisonné brickwork, geometric brick patterns (mainly of a "kappa" form) and, on the

[533] Moutsopoulos considers that the embellishment at St. John can be assocoiated with the Kastorian examples but seems to pay no regard to the diffrences in placement and quality of execution. Moutsopoulos (1992), 140-1 and general discussion at 433-476.
[534] See also the Koimesis, Lambovo and a basilical church at Mentzaina. Ibid, 199 and 207 (plans at 203 & 210). Vokotopoulos sees a close relationship between the Koimesis and Kastorian churches in typology and morphological features; ibid, 202.
[535] Ćurčić (2010), 331.
[536] Epstein (1980), 199.

dome, encircling bands of tile in reticulate patterns. Saw tooth bands extend across the façades, over apertures and encircle the drum as well as forming cornices.[537] As in the Panaxiotissa, the embellishments have been executed with care and confidence. There is clear affinity in these features between Kastoria and the Greek churches of the tenth century reviewed by Vokotopoulos. The differences between them and the features of St. John become even more marked when considering that affinity.

A further potential factor in dating has been suggested by Săsălov. He has compared the relationship of the height of the drum with the diameter of the dome on a range of Byzantine churches and felt that there was a relationship between them that signposted different building periods. No church after the eighth century, he argued, was without a drum and the drum height tended to increase thereafter. The tabular data he presents is not, however, wholly convincing. The proportion for St John (10: 6.2) could point to a building period anywhere from the seventh to the fourteenth century.[538] He considered the church to be a tenth-century structure, in the end, basing his conclusions on a stylistic comparison with SS. Peter and Paul in Novi Pazar (Serbia) and of a church in Veliussa, both argued to be of the period 927 – 969, erected in the time of Khan Peter. The comparison is shaky not least because the former appears to be a ninth century construction.[539]

He had particular regard not only to the height of the drum on SS. Peter and Paul but also the articulation of its surface. On its upper surface, just below the roof, are a series of thirty blind niches and on its lower register the drum is pierced by four

[537] For a description and images of the Koubelidiki see Moutsopoulos (1992), 87-109 and figs.92-94 (p. 100) for images of the brick patterns.
[538] Săsălov (1980), 196-70.
[539] Ćurčić (2010), 343. It was established as an episcopal seat in the tenth century.

windows.[540] In this arrangement there is some resemblance with St John but it is tenuous. The drum at SS. Peter and Paul is hexagonal, there are no brick heads over the apertures and the whole exterior surface of the church is completely lacking in adornment. Except for the attention given to the drum there is nothing that can relate this building, a rotunda, to St. John. The treatment of the drum at SS. Peter and Paul has greater affinity with that of the Panaghia at Skripou with simple apertures in an unarticulated façade. It can be likened, furthermore, to the central apse of St. Sophia, Ohrid with its simple niches and polygonal form.[541]

The brief review of scholarly opinion on St. John has highlighted two dichotomies. On the one hand, major structural elements like the wall pier supports seem to point away from the capital yet, on the other, the absence on the structure of expansive decorative embellishment, the restriction of decorative features to limited zones and the presence of surface plasticity point specifically away from southern Greece and Kastoria. As well as such differentiation we must not ignore the rudeness of execution of the decorative patterns at St. John compared with the relative confidence in the execution of ornament in the Panaxiotissa, the Koimesis at Lambovo and the Kastorian churches.

Săsălov is surely correct in identifying a tall drum as characteristic of Byzantine church building after the late ninth century. It is also clear from the sample reviewed above that the drum was the focus of additional embellishment through various bands

[540] Săsălov (1980), 198. Other writers have dated the structure to the mid-eleventh century. Epstein (1980), 195, n.23. Images of the church may be found at www.kosovo.net/petrova.html and in Ćurčić (2010), 342, fig.374.
[541] Ćurčić in fact relates the Novi Pazar church to Sv. Donat, Zadar in ground plan, horseshoe apse, wedge-shaped masonry piers and a comparative building technique. Ćurčić (2010), 343 and for Sv. Donat, ibid, 340-1.

of reticulate tilework, sawtooth courses and, as at St. John, brick modelling to create blind arcading. St. John is clearly part of that general development in Byzantine architecture but, by the clear differences of expression, it is demonstrable that the manner in which exterior display is expressed was responsive to regional variations.

In contrast, basic structural forms are not reliable indicators of regionality, as is shown by a consideration of the wall pier supports. Vokotopoulos has argued that the use of wall piers and not a four point support system was, for the tenth century, a characteristic of southern Greece and Epirus and not the capital.[542]On that basis Vokotopoulos saw St. John as unrelated to metropolitan architecture.[543] This does not seem to be a sustainable argument because of the example of the Panaghia at Skripou (873/4), which also carries its dome on elongated wall piers. The church was built by a member of the imperial elite and might therefore be expected to exhibit some of the then current Constantinopolitan traditions; indeed Mango asserts it is an example of the start of Byzantine architecture in Greece and sees the carved ornament on its exterior as an export from the capital.[544]

It is clear that it is in the detail of surface modelling and embellishment that regional variation can be most readily detected and, since St. John exhibits both surface modelling as well as surface ornament, it is necessary to consider how and when they reached Mesembria.

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[542] Vokotopoulos (1989), 190.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Mango (1985), 116. The templon screen within the church, contemporary with the building, has been confidently associated with then current Constantinopolitan models. Megaw (1966b), 18 and 26-7. Ćurčić sees the church as a "conglomerate of three separate churches" combining features from differing basic designs basilical, centrally focused and featuring a transept. He sees it as reflecting then contemporary trends in the capital after Iconoclasm. Ćurčić (2010), 316-7.

3.3.1.1. Surface embellishment.

Wholesale surface embellishment and the absence of façade plasticity became characteristic of late ninth-century Kastoria, and Vokotopoulos has noted that this also applied to churches of southern Greece in a grouping he has identified as pro-Helladic.[545] The characteristics of this group are plain surfaces embellished with saw tooth string courses, decorative brick patterns and the first signs of cloisonné, vertically inserted bricks; an ornamental elaboration of flat surfaces. The close affinity with the Kastorian churches is clear.[546]

This embellishment, furthermore, seemed to be applied without regard to structural forms; indeed one might almost say that it actively obscured form. Brick patterns cover whole surface areas and are not limited by structural lines. Vertically placed as well as horizontal bands of patterns are applied to create an overall appearance of ornateness. Such application of ornament was not to be found in the capital.[547]

As we have seen, at St. John the surface embellishment is neither extensive nor executed with skill or confidence. Furthermore the saw tooth elements are limited to roof cornices. The introduction of the limited range of pattern is suggestive of experimentation and diffidence. Furthermore the restriction of the patterns to lunettes and spandrels points to a tradition that subordinates ornament to the structural framework. As Ousterhout has noted, such a practice typified Constantinopolitan building and ran counter to developments in Greece and Macedonia.[548] The tradition

[545] Vokotopoulos (1989), 202-204.
[546] Epstein (1980), 193.
[547] Ousterhout (1999), 200.
[548] Ousterhout (1999), 195-200.

of limiting ornamentation to zones delineated by the architecture (lunettes and niches) persisted in Mesembria in its late Byzantine buildings such as St. John Aleiturgitos (fig. 524) and the Archangels (fig. 53).[549] It seems that Mesembrian builders did not partake in developments in external embellishment familiar in Greece and Macedonia throughout the period from the late ninth to the eleventh century but rather took their cue from developments in the capital.

The restriction of saw tooth to roof cornices is a characteristic of the early tenth-century Constantinopolitan churches of Constantine Lips and the Myrelaion. It is also to be found in Thessaloniki. Saw tooth band cornices were applied to H. Sophia, a seventh century church.[550] Vokotopoulos reports that a small basilical, single apsed chapel annexed to the southeast flank wall of H. Demetrios has been dated by Velenis as earlier than the Panaghia ton Chalkeon (1028) and "correlated" with the Lips church in Constantinople.[551] Here, there is both an absence of surface modelling and a limiting of saw tooth work to the roof cornice. Window apertures are simply adorned with brick heads.[552]

Kastoria seems to have undergone a development of surface ornament quite different from that visible at St. John. The late ninth- and early tenth-century Kastorian churches were embellished with a variety of forms, the "kappa" (forward and reverse), sunbursts around Chi-Rho motifs and what appear to be other Greek letters

[549] Ibid, 195.
[550] Ousterhout (2001), 10.
[551] On stylistic and technical grounds, the use of uncoursed rubble and a heavy application of mortar pointing to a ninth and tenth-century construction technique and, moreover, unlike the masonry of fourteenth century buildings in the city, that being the period for the internal frescoes. Vokotopoulos (1989), 194. This dating is supported by Ćurčić. Ćurčić, S. (2010), 279.
[552] For a plan of the structure see Papagiannopoulos (Undated), 44 and for an image, Vokotopoulos (1989), 194, fig. 9.

"chi", "upsilon" and "nu".[553] Not only is there a variety of forms exhibited but, in a sense, they are "legible". The "Greek" letters are recognisably such and the Chi-Rho symbol is a self-contained Christian message. The difference between these and what is found at St. John is marked. In the latter there is no attempt to either create "letters" or, save for the simple cruciform pattern on the east façade, any recognisable symbols.[554]

An attempt has nevertheless been made at St. John to create patterns in brick but there is a very limited range comprising single uprights and a repeated inverted "v" shapes. The most extensive pattern of the latter motif appears above the central west entrance where the rows combine to form the semblance of a reticulate form and, in this, there is, admittedly, some resemblance to patterns of embellishment on the Greek and Macedonian churches.

In the Taxiarchs, Kastoria and other structures there the motif is widely used. In the former there is a vertical herringbone pattern inserted beneath the eastern gable end wall above the apse that is created using a repeated "v" pattern.[555] The Koubelidiki drum also displays, at the springing level of the window arches and below the roof cornice, bands of tile cut to create a repeating "v" pattern.[556] In H. Stephanos the spandrels between the apses arches are filled with angular brick insertions but in a manner that appears to replicate the "kappa" motif elsewhere on the structure.[557] In

[553] Epstein (1980), 194.
[554] Moutsopoulos appears to take a different view, seeing a symbolic pattern in the brickwork above the apse windows. Moutsopoulos (1992), 140-1. I do not consider that tenable. The patterns on the apse can more readily be recognised as simple brick insertions akin to those elsewhere on the structure.
[555] Epstein (1980), 194, fig. 12. For a full description of the Taxiarchs see Moutsopoulos (1992), 113-201 and figs 104 (p. 116), 119 (p. 130), 120 (p. 131) and 120 (p' 132) for images of brick patterns.
[556] Epstein (1980), fig. 14.
[557] Ibid, fig. 13. See also Moutsopoulos (1992), 203-305 for a full discussion.

the Koimesis at Lambovo and in the Panaxiotissa there are lozenge and chevrons patterns that are reminiscent of reticulate forms.[558] The repeating "v" motif also appears, as continuous bands, on the nave walls of the H. Anargyroi (and on the nave extension above the apse) and in two registers (again as continuous bands) in H. Nikolaos.[559] Both these buildings are of a much later date although there is a debate as to how much later.[560] In all the Kastorian structures the characteristics of the ornament are regularity and variety of pattern, careful execution and extensive coverage. As has already been noted these are not characteristic of the ornament at St. John, notwithstanding the seeming sharing of the "v" motif.

The patterns at St. John are consistent between the zones, not only in motifs (diagonals, chevrons and pairs of horizontal lines and verticals) but in their ordering: the horizontals and verticals form a band between the chevrons, a pair of horizontals topped by an inverted 'v' and alternating verticals and horizontals. On the apse the pairings of horizontals and chevrons are repeated and arranged about a brick cross.

A combination of similar motifs, the chevron and horizontal vertical brick inserts, similarly placed, is to be found in southern Asia Minor, in a monastery complex in the Binbirkilise region. A church, referred to as No. 35, a single polygonal apsed building, preserves, on the west wall, the remnants of brick and stone arches over the entrances with the brick inserts in the lunettes.[561] The outer (of three) arch was constructed of alternating stone voussoirs and two or three bricks in a pattern

[558] Megaw (1966), Pl. IV(b) for the Koimesis; Vokotopoulos (1989), 205 for the Panaxiotissa.
[559] Epstein (1980), 196, fig. 16 (the Anargyroi), fig. 18 (H. Nikolaos tou Kasnitze).
[560] For example, Epsteiin together with Krautheimer says the eleventh century for the Anargyroi and the twelfth century for Hagios Nikolaos. Epstein (1980), 198-199; Krautheimer (1986), 336. Vokotopoulos asserts a date of the second half of the tenth century for the Anargyroi; Vokotopoulos (1989), 199.
[561] Ramsay and Bell (1909), 184 and fig. 153 (p. 188).

reminiscent of that in St. John. What remains of the brick inserts seem to suggest a combination of simple "v" and verticals. There is no clear date for this complex but its four point inner pier support structure with wall responds suggests that it was domed, suggesting an early middle Byzantine build period.[562] The insertion of the brick into zones limited by structural forms is also a feature shared with St. John as was the rude and simple execution.[563]

This church was part of an extensive monastery complex of which one further building (No. 45), at least, had multiple brick arches and a tympanum filled with upright stones.[564] There were further decorative elements. Short bands of tiles were arranged in a herringbone fashion and in niches tiles were also set in herringbone. This pattern is repeated in the upper register of a lintel over one of the doors.[565] The work was, again, roughly performed and reminiscent of St. John.

A possible connection between central Asia Minor and the capital is suggested in the manner by which "structure" was displayed in one of the major rock cut churches of Cappadocia examined by Epstein.[566] The decoration of the Tokalı Kilise (albeit of necessity all internal) emphasises lines of a built structure through incised lines suggesting courses of ashlar. Geometric patterns comprising chevrons and diaper work have been applied, replicating the appearance of masonry. The church has been dated to the tenth century with the decorative elements associated with the capital in

[562] Ibid, 184.
[563] Ramsay described the church as "a good example of peasant workmanship, planned and executed by local builders"; ibid, 189.
[564] Ramsay and Bell (1909), 190-3. This structure also had walls articulated in similar, if not in identical, fashion by shallow pilasters.
[565] Ramsay and Bell (1909), 195, fig. 158.
[566] Epstein (1986).

both painting and architectural forms.[567] It is appropriate to note in passing in the context of later discussion on display through form and masses, that this church was conceived as a five domed cross-in-square.[568]

The commonality of some basic forms of brick decoration in geographically distant regions of the empire suggests that it was introduced, as a motif for external embellishment, from a centre from which wide dissemination was possible, after which the basic forms became subject to local influences. Such a place in the middle Byzantine period was Constantinople though there is no evidence of such decoration, even in a very limited form, in the capital before the eleventh century.[569] The accidents of survival and the continual redevelopment of the capital mean that it cannot be asserted that surface elaboration was not to be found there in the ninth and tenth centuries. Indeed when it does make an appearance in surviving structures such as the south church of Constantine Lips,[570] the Eski Imaret Camii[571] and Gül Camii,[572] it is in an expressive, varied and confidently displayed form that suggests earlier progenitors.

It is difficult, having regard to all available evidence, to discount a Constantinopolitan source for the original impetus to embellish the exteriors. As has frequently been noted, the capital was, in the middle Byzantine period, the core of a highly centralised state and that had its effect in the dissemination of ideas in art and architecture.[573] As Wharton has noted, the power of the centre was not absolute in artistic terms and

[567] Ibid, 11 and 47.
[568] Ibid, 47.
[569] Ousterhout (1999), 195.
[570] Krautheimer (1986), 424, figs 380 and 381.
[571] Ibid, 362, fig. 316.
[572] Ibid, 367, fig. 322.
[573] Wharton (1988), 1-2.

regional variations and traditions persisted, although builders and their patrons might seek, in various ways, to incorporate elements with an association with the capital by way of enhancement of status.[574]

Kastoria shows that brick embellishment appears in Byzantine architecture by the late ninth century. In St John the forms are limited in type and by structural elements related more closely to the capital than Macedonia and Greece. The crudeness and limitation in form suggests an early experimental stage. The evidence thus far points to a late ninth- and tenth-century building period for St. John and that is in line, as we have seen, with other opinion based on major structural elements. It is to be noted that for the greatest part of that period Mesembria was part of the Bulgar state, as was Kastoria.

That the architecture of St. John is more closely aligned with the capital is revealed through the application on it of surface modelling.

3.3.1.2. Façade modelling

The modelling of the walls of St John through blind arches is a facet not discernible in the ninth- and tenth-century building of Kastoria and Greece until the advent of the Theotokos at H. Loukas and the churches of the Greek (Helladic) School in the late tenth to the eleventh century. Pilasters and the related recessed planes associated, in many cases, with them, arise in a number of areas in the ninth and tenth centuries. There are, however, two avenues only by which that feature could realistically have

[574] Ibid, 8-9.

reached Mesembria. One is directly from the capital and the other is via the Bulgar lands.

In Constantinople itself the two exemplars of early tenth-century architecture are the North Church of Constantine Lips (907) and of the Myrelaion (920) and both are adorned with pilasters. In the former they are flat and rectangular, and in the latter they take the form of dramatic half round cylinders rising to roof level.[575] In the latter triangular pilasters also articulate the dome between which are blind arches further recessed.

The churches of Constantine Lips and the Myrelaion show that, in Constantinople, the enlivening of facades had a variety of expression. The versatility of the half round pilasters of the Myrelaion is particularly expressive of that versatility. It is reasonable to propose that the tradition was already standard in the capital's building repertoire.[576]

Surface modelling found expression in Asia Minor in the church at Dereağzi where the recession of plains and articulation of the north and south walls by strong rectangular buttressing is a singular characteristic of the building. Morganstern related the building specifically to Constantine Lips and to the Myrelaion in part on the basis of the treatment of the facades.[577] He concluded that it was a building conceived in Constantinople and probably built by Constantinopolitan labour. The importation of Proconnesian marble doors and window frames, mullions and other architectural

[575] For plans and eleveations of the North church see Megaw (1964), particularly pl. E. For the Myrelaion see Striker (1981), elevations nos. 10-12.
[576] Ćurčić notes that the level of sophistication reached in the Lips church must pre-suppose earlier experimentation. Ćurčić (2010), 274.
[577] Morganstern (1983), 86 -90.

fittings and furnishings, the majority carved in the second half of the ninth or early tenth century, point strongly to a metropolitan involvement.[578]

The singularity of the construction of Dereağzi is apparent when one considers that recession of planes and the application of pilasters do not appear to be characteristics of many other churches dated to the ninth century, St Clement at Ankara,[579] Church "H" at Side,[580] a church in the episcopal palace, Side,[581] or Fatih Camii, Tirilye.[582] Interestingly, even close to Constantinople in Thrace, the church of St Sophia, Vize, dated after 833 (but not without some uncertainty), lacks external wall articulation (other than crude functional buttressing).[583]

The application of pilasters and other elements of surface articulation is, however, exhibited in other regions in Asia Minor in what appear to be early middle Byzantine structures. The monastery complex containing Church No. 35 in the Binbirkilise region has already been mentioned in connection with surface embellishment. Like St. John it also reveals surface modelling. The exterior of the north and west walls are articulated with a series of flat rectangular pilasters. Responds on the inner north and south walls indicate that this church may have carried a dome. The irregularity of the sizes of the pilasters and lack of equal spacing between them suggests that they were applied at least as much for appearance as structural necessity.[584]

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[578] Morganstern (1983), 168 and for the catalogue of finds, 154-168.
[579] Plan in Krautheimer (1986), 287.
[580] Ruggieri (1991), 242; Eyice (1958), fig.2.
[581] Mansel (1963), 168-9. Ruggieri (1995), 110-13.
[582] Mango (1985), 97.
[583] Mango (1968), 9-13. Bauer and Klein (2006), 249-270. The structure has been variously dated to the eighth or ninth century, the thirteenth or fourteenth century and in two phases, one in the tenth and the other in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, ibid, 249-250. Ousterhout (2001), 9.
[584] See Ramsay and Bell (1909), 183-189 and particularly 189 for the observations concerning the pilasters, piers and responds.

Pilasters and blind arches also articulated buildings on the Dalmatian coast in the early ninth century as witness the church of Sv. Donat at Zadar.[585] That is unsurprising given the relative proximity of Ravenna across the Adriatic Sea. Ravenna contained many structures of the fifth and sixth century with walls similarly articulated by pilasters and blind arcades amongst which were the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and San Vitale itself. Sv. Donat's features are highly unlikely to have played a part in developments the other side of the Balkan landmass.[586] They are unlikely to have penetrated to Mesembria when features on buildings in Kastoria and southern Greece, much closer to the city and under the same Bulgar political overlordship, did not have such features.

What transpired in the Bulgar lands during Symeon's reign with regard to architecture is not simply explained. The forms of ornament of Kastoria in the west seemed to differ markedly from what was taking place in the eastern regions as represented by St. John, Mesembria. That difference is also apparent when the issue of surface modelling is considered.

The application of pilasters in Bulgar building in the eastern regions appears to date to the period immediately following Christianisation when a large number of disparate

[585] Krautheimer (1986), 310-11.
[586] Ćurčić considers that a "very different set of circumstances" than a Constantinopolitan connection surrounds its construction although aspects of its construction recall then contemporary Byzantine construction generally (the drum, re-use of material and general masonry techniques). He reminds us that Zadar was, at the time of the church's construction, within Byzantine control and transmission across the imperial Balkan territory might have been thus facilitated. Ćurčić (2010), 340-2. Nevertheless, as he acknowledges, the differences between this building and contemporary structures closer to the capital are considerable and he rightly sees the development from the ninth century on of the growth of regional "styles" all growing out of a shared Byzantine common heritage (*koine*) but where differences become pronounced through a combination of local patronage and local workshop practices, the latter well recognized by Ousterhout. Ibid, 343 and for workshop practices Ousterhout (1999) ch. 2. See also above p. 153 and n. 541 regarding the closely related SS. Peter and Paul, Novi Pazar.

basilical churches were erected in or around Pliska.[587] In none was there any evidence of exterior surface ornamentation.[588]

The so called Boyar church (fig. 63) was a small three aisled basilica, measuring 15.6m by 8.7m (but ca.12m long if a doubtful narthex is excluded).[589] There are some similarities with the form and layout of St John the Baptist. There are three western entrances. The naos is divided internally by four masonry piers and at the eastern end stud walls extend westwards to create pastophoria chambers as they do in St. John.

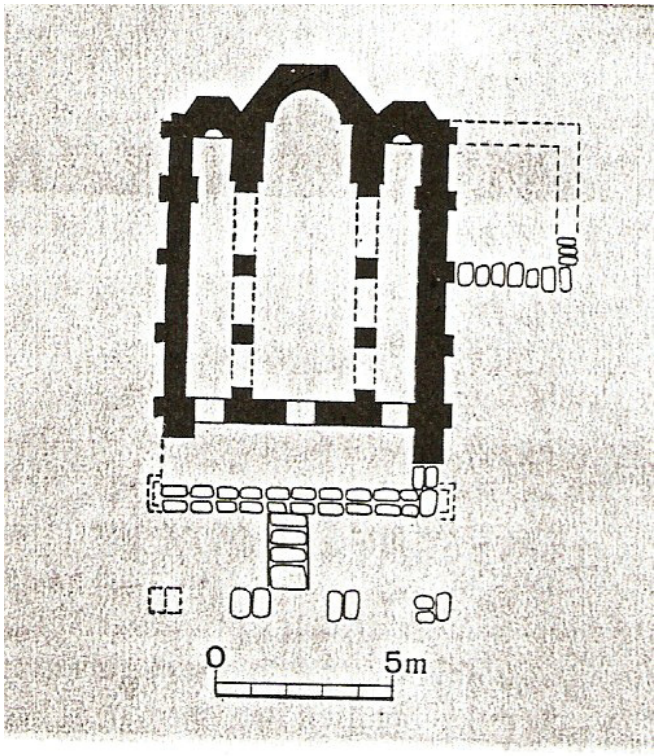
The eastern end terminates in three apses, all of which are three sided. This form for the apses recalls the great basilica in Pliska,[590] thus seemingly following established forms from the sixth century including examples as the Old Metropolis in Mesembria. The Boyar church has been dated from the second half of the ninth century to the beginning of the tenth century.[591] The wall construction appears to have been *opus mixtum* and, interestingly, a saw-tooth cornice in brick apparently crowned the walls.[592]

Of particular interest in the present discussion is the evidence of flat pilasters on the exterior facades of the north and south walls. Save for the eastern-most pair they have no inner counterparts. They have, seemingly, no structural function. They appear to

[587] Mijatev (1974), 80-81.
[588] Ibid, 81.
[589] Ibid, 81-83. For a ground plan, ibid, 82, fig. 77.
[590] Mijatev (1974), 77-9. Ćurčić has no doubt the Great Basilica was an Early Byzantine (sixth century) construction and not the product building activity of Khan Boris after conversion. The similarities between this church and the sixth-century Mesembrian structures of the Old Metropolis and the Virgin Eleusa are indeed compelling. Ćurčić (2010), 229-30.
[591] Mijatev (1974), 82.
[592] Ibid.

have been elements of decorative blind arches. In this regard they bear comparison with the walls of St John the Baptist.

Figure 63.



Pliska. Boyar Church. Reproduced from Mijatev, K. 1974. *Die mittelalterliche Baukunst in Bulgarien*. Sofia, p. 82.

The Boyar church is not the only structure within the Bulgar lands on which pilasters have been applied and by no means are they peculiar to Bulgaria. However, in Mijatev's view, whilst the pilasters and blind arches and arcades in other regions reflected, or were direct projections of, structural elements, this was not the case in Bulgaria.[593] He argued that such "pseudo" constructive elements were a peculiarly

[593] Mijatev (1974), 83. Ćurčić rightly observes that "pseudo-structural" elements cannot be said to "owe nothing to Constantinopolitan architecture merely because the only surviving examples are in Bulgar lands. He notes that the patterns of churches and apparent patronage follow trends in Byzantium. Indeed the design features may well in fact provide clues for the appearance of ninth-

national Bulgar feature and purely for external decorative effect. A startling example of what he describes is Basilica No 5 in Pliska where the north and south facades only are articulated by five pilasters (unequally spaced). Save for the pair adjacent to the west wall of the naos they do not appear to bear any relationship with inner structural members.[594]

The sample size presented in support of his argument is small (four churches) and the asserted lack of relationship between outer articulation and inner structural elements is only borne out in one of them, (No 5). In the others the pilasters or blind arches correspond with walls or piers of inner structure.

What is common to all, however, is the absence of corresponding inner wall pilasters on the north and south walls. There is a structural explanation. Of the sample presented there is significant thickening of the walls in the bema zone which points to that area having been vaulted and which then implies that the remainder carried a wooden roof.[595] That being the case the north and south walls would not have required buttressing. In Basilica No. 8 the pilasters to the north and south west walls develop into blind arches and the location of the pilasters correspond with inner support structures, walls and piers. Those pilasters appear to be decorative elements.

Façade articulation is most dramatic in one major structure in Bulgaria, the Round Church in Preslav.[596] This structure is quite unlike any other building uncovered from

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century structures erected in the capital such as the number erected in the palace by Basil I that we aware of from the *Vita Basilii*. Ćurčić (2010), 284. See pp. 31-7 for a discussion of the Vita Basilii.
[594] Mijatev (1974), 84.
[595] Mijatev (1974).
[596] For description and plan see ibid, 90-3 and for reconstruction, 98, fig. 99. For an image, Krautheimer (1986), 320, fig. 284.

the first Bulgar state, both in form of foundation and expression in elevation. Whether or not it is a palatine structure,[597] its individuality and design is stark. Twelve half round exedrae encompass the naos and the prominent stilted apse to the east.[598] The exterior walls of the church are articulated by alternating rectangular and semi-circular buttressing. On the propylaeum walls blind arcades contain convex walls of brick. The concave and convex animation of the walls is a notable feature.[599]

The prototype for the church has been the cause of much debate. Mango rightly observes that cross-in-square and other centrally focussed churches associated with Symeon's rule fully reflect liturgical and building development within Byzantium and in particular Constantinople.[600] As the sources amply reveal Symeon saw himself as the rightful Orthodox ruler in succession to the Byzantine emperor. The church, adjacent to the palace, was as likely as not going to reflect Constantinopolitan structures of imperial or elite stamp.[601] In part the modulation of the walls is highly reminiscent of a similar feature in the Myrelaion where the north and south facades of the narthex of the latter billow out from between rounded buttressing.[602] Mijatev observed that the form of the Round Church was based on concepts "foreign" to Bulgar builders in Pliska and Preslav[603] and considered it a possibility that Symeon himself chose the design inspired by designs he had witnessed during his long stay in

[597] Mango (1985), 173, (it was not); Mijatev (1974), 92 and Krautheimer (1986), 318 (it was). Ćurčić is in no doubt it to be attributed to Symeon and was a structure of status. Ćurčić (2010), 289.
[598] For a full description and plan see Mijatev (1974), 92-96; for a reconstruction ibid, 98, fig. 99.
[599] Ibid, 90.
[600] Mango (1985), 174-5.
[601] Mijatev (1974), 92-3; Mango (1985), 174. Ćurčić notes that a description of the Round Church in a medieval Bulgar text refers to it as a "Golden Church". Such an allusion in his view potentially associates the building with the Chrysotryklinos (Golden Hall), an eight-niched domed building in the throne room of the imperial palace and given renewed decorative attention by Michael III. The political and religious functions associated with it reinforce the idea of a Constantinopolitan and imperial inspiration for the Round Church. Ćurčić (2010), 289-90.
[602] Striker (1981), 20 and Plate 28.
[603] Mijatev (1974), 90.

Constantinople becoming "half Greek".[604] The "foreign" elements could only realistically come from the capital. Either the Myrelaion, or a building it was itself inspired by, may well have been Symeon's inspiration. The evidence points to the Bulgar (Preslav) builders introducing the concept of decorative surface moulding from Byzantine (metropolitan) models and then applying it to a variety of churches in both simple and complex ways.

At the more prosaic level the churches uncovered in Preslav and its surrounding area relating to the building of Symeon's reign and thereafter were primarily of a cross-in-square format in a variety of types.[605] A close relationship between them and then current Constantinopolitan practice has been detected, as has a great similarity among the Preslav churches in design, size and masonry suggesting they were products of a single workshop or "school".[606] The masonry was fieldstone or roughly squared stone of irregular sizes and shapes with interstices filled with various pieces of brick. There is much resemblance here to the masonry of St. John. Furthermore facades were frequently modelled through blind arcades, both singly and doubly recessed.[607]

The cross-in-square based on a four column or pier support seemingly appeared in Bulgaria, prior to Symeon's reign, as evidenced by the remains of a single apsed palace church in Pliska of which only the foundations remain.[608] Sufficient survives, however, to show that the north, south and east facades carried pilasters (or perhaps in

[604] Mijatev (1974), 92-3.
[605] Vokotopoulos (1989), 193; Mijatev (1974), 103.
[606] Mijatev (1974), 103-4. The Constantinopolitan features were the presence of forechoirs lengthening the naos and fully developed and communicating pastophoria. Ćurčić agrees all the building types, not merely the cross-in-square, show an adherence to then current principles of architecture of the capital. Ćurčić (2010), 291-2.
[607] Mijatev (1974), 104.
[608] Ibid, 102-3 and fig. 109 for a ground plan. See also Ćurčić (2010), 284 and fig.298. Ćurčić agrees that the designation "palace church" is correct and concurs with the view that it may represent one of the oldest, if not the oldest example of the form in a Bulgar context. Ibid.

this case more properly shallow buttressing) that one presumes developed, to the north and south, into blind arches reflecting the lateral vaulting, extending then east and west into arcading. On a relatively small structure (13m x 8.5m) such a feature would have been a highly visible decorative element.

This manner of surface articulation is reflected in latter building in Preslav as evidenced by its presence on a wide variety of structures and not merely the cross-in-square form.[609] Of particular interest is the Church No.1 at Bjal Brjag where the form has become significantly more elaborate and there is a noticeable disconnection between the pilasters and the support structure.[610] Here the north and south façades are adorned with a series of flat pilasters upon which half round columns have been applied. The non-alignment with the inner four point supports indicates that the external decorative appearance (spacing and regularity of pattern) was an important aspect of the building. The west façade was adorned with pilasters with triangular protrusions. These, as with the north and south walls, one assumes, would have developed into blind arcading. The profiles of the pilasters would have suggested a double recession of planes. It is tempting to relate the half round profiles to the features on the Round Church and the Myrelaion.[611]

There seems to be convincing evidence that surface articulation by way of pilasters and blind arcading was a part of the Bulgar building repertoire by the last half of the ninth century and associated, moreover, with the elite and ruling classes. For that

[609] Examples are set out by Mijatev (1974), 103-5 and 106-109.
[610] Ibid, 104 and fig. 112 (p. 105) for a ground plan. See also Ćurčić (2010), 292, fig.305 (C).
[611] As Mijatev (1974), 104 (the Round Church) and Vokotopoulos (1989), 193 (the Myrelaion) have done. Vokotopoulos is uncomfortable with a tenth-century dating for this church preferring one of the eleventh or twelfth century; ibid, 193, n. 12. He has reason to be sceptical. The multiple recession of planes did not seemingly become a standard feature of Byzantine (Constantinopolitan) building until the eleventh century. Furthermore the triple faced apses are redolent of late eleventh-century structures.

reason it may be expected that structures displaying this feature might well have reflected then current Constantinopolitan practice. Be that as it may, the practice was well established and reflected in the fresh building of the tenth century of Preslav. The question mark over the dating of Church No.1 at Bjal Brjag does not disturb that conclusion. Furthermore the application of those features in Bulgar building, whether or not one accepts Mijatev's contention that "pseudo structure" was a Bulgar innovation, was for obvious decorative effect and so from an early stage, probably as early as the building of the late ninth-century churches in Kastoria.

There is then an inescapable conclusion that, within the single political entity of Bulgaria, two distinct traditions of external display were being developed that, until the advent of the so-called Greek School and after the Byzantine recovery of the Balkan peninsula, remained distinct and separate. Moreover the eastern part of the Bulgar state partook more closely in then current developments in Constantinople, quite understandably so since it was the part that not only was physically adjacent to the capital but it also contained the seat of Bulgar power.

Notwithstanding the separate developments of the forms of external display, both eastern and western regions of Bulgaria had acquired the cultural urge to embellish exteriors and, I would argue, from a common fount, Constantinople, at some stage during the ninth century. That there were commonalities between the regions and some cultural sharing is shown by the decorative saw tooth courses elaborating the facades of the Panaghia at Skripou as well as its enveloping friezes, neither of which appear to relate it to the capital, all on a building erected at the behest of an imperial official.

In terms of the dating of St. John it can be seen that there is no reason why it could not have been the product of Bulgar building from the late ninth century. At the other end of the possible spectrum is the period of Byzantine reconquest of the late tenth century and early eleventh.

3.3.1.3. A proposed dating

The church cannot reasonably be a product of the period prior to 812. Mesembria then had at least three structures dating from the sixth century, two of which, the Old Metropolis and the Virgin Eleusa, were sizeable. Although the cross-in-square form was established in Byzantium by the end of the eighth century there is no evidence of new building projects in Mesembria in the early ninth century and no discernible reason for any to take place. The basilical form, moreover, was tenacious as witness the undomed form of the Protaton on Mount Athos (the earliest church there and the administrative capital).[612] We are also aware that there seemed to be some resistance to the new forms in the ninth century within and close to the capital.[613] The high drum of St John points to a ninth to tenth century dating as can be seen from the evidence compiled by Săsălov.[614] The general thrust of his argumentation is surely correct. Early centrally focused churches had wide (in proportion to their height) drums.

As to the period between 812 and 864, the Bulgars were still pagan, converting in 864 itself. We have seen, in any event, that the form initially adopted for the

[612] Mango (1985), 118.
[613] See above, p. 35.
[614] See p. 152-3.

Christianisation process, for both large and small churches, was the basilica, with the possible exception of one or two structures erected within the palace precincts.[615]

From 864 to 894, as epigraphic evidence shows, there was a process of rebuilding taking place in Mesembria.[616] The inscription suggests rebuilding and reconstruction upon existing foundations (from base, βάθρον, backwards, πάλιν) – a restoration of what was formerly there. Indeed, as the investigations of the walls has revealed, the repairs following the damage caused by Krum's siege was performed in a manner highly reminiscent of Roman *opus mixtum*. Such repair work can be seen in the masonry of the Old Metropolis.[617] The extent of the new masonry – the original *optus mixtum* is visible at ground floor level – shows that, as the inscription implied, destruction had indeed been almost to the ground (fig. 64). Heavy use of brick characterised these reconstructions as did the insertion of large pieces of spolia (fig. 65).[618] Masonry is laid to courses and signposts a period of stability, availability of appropriate resources and materials and an intention to reconstruct former monuments in the original style. Neither an extensive use of brick nor coursed, regular masonry characterises the church of St John, still less an attempt to reflect earlier styles.

It may be argued that rebuilding, at this time, under the apparent patronage of the imperial family, should have entailed the introduction of churches in the cross-in-square format exemplified by the building in the capital of the *Nea Ekklesia* around 880. Quite apart from the issue as to whether the *Nea* was a cross-in-square form,

[615] Ćurčić (2010), 283-5 and figs 297 and 299.
[616] See p. 128 for the inscription.
[617] Venedikov (1969a), 159.
[618] The inscription has been identified as an extract from Psalm 101.2 and may have originally have adorned this same church when originally constructed. Velkov (1992), 20.

Figure 64.

Mesembria. Old Metropolis. Masonry. South from within nave.

Figure 65.

Mesembria. Old Metropolis. Spoil use.

sources indicate a provincial resistance to new forms.[619] It is to be noted, furthermore, that building work was carried out in 884/5 in Trebizond under the patronage of the same imperial family and resulted in the erection of the church of St Anne (fig.2 [b]) in a very traditional basilical format.[620]

(a) The period of Bulgar possession, 895-971.

The first thirty two years of the second Bulgar occupation of the city (i.e after 894) were characterised by almost continuous hostilities between the Bulgar state under Symeon and the empire during which armies were regularly moving across Thrace. Symeon besieged Constantinople five times in that period. A heavy defeat of Byzantine forces at Ankhialos in 917 reveals how close to Mesembria hostilities came.[621] The choice of Debeltos or Mesembria for diplomatic activity, for much of the time until 927, shows that the territorial boundary was close by. Symeon was almost continually at war in Thrace not only with Byzantine forces but also Serbian. Browning considers Symeon's policies were at the cost of "fearful devastation of much of his country".[622]

On the death of Symeon in 927, his successor Peter married into the imperial family and became the recipient of annual tribute (or "maintenance" for Maria Lekapena). He also had bestowed on him the title of "emperor of Bulgaria".[623] The position of the Bulgar ruler in the Byzantine hierarchy had been adjusted downwards from spiritual

[619] *De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem*. *AASS*, Nov. III, 878 ff. Mango (1972), 201-2 (the repair by Basil I of the Church of the Virgin at Pêgê); see pp. 35-6. For a current discussion of the *Nea* and up-to-date bibliography see Ćurčić (2010), 273-4 and 854.
[620] See p. 66.
[621] Obolensky (1971), 151.
[622] Browning (1975), 60-65.
[623] Obolensky (1971), 158.

"brother" to "son".[624] Byzantine sources reveal the treaty of 927 as healing the former rift in the *oikoumene*. Indeed it has been argued that the wedding celebrations themselves were designed to reveal both, to Peter, the impiety of Symeon and, to the wider world that Byzantium having dealt with Bulgaria was able to protect other threatened Christian lands (e.g. from the Arabs).[625] For the next forty years, as Obolensky has it, Bulgaria was "reduced to the status of a docile satellite".[626]

During the reign of Peter (927-69) Orthodoxy spread throughout the Bulgar lands and there was significant building of monasteries. The archbishopric of Bulgaria was raised to a patriarchate nominally independent of Constantinople,[627] and the liturgy was conducted in Slavonic. Pilgrimage centres such as that in the Rila Mountains were also being established.[628] The creation of those establishments suggests Peter's reign was a time when religious building work was taking place.

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[624] *De Ceremoniis*, ii, 48. Obolensky (1971), 158-9.

[625] Shepard (1995), 128-30. As Shepard noted acts of hostility by the Bulgars towards Byzantium did not immediately cease upon Symeon's death and continued up to a few months before the marriage. However the choice of wedding venue, the church at Pêgê, that had suffered destruction at the hand of Symeon, sent a clear message to Peter of how Byzantium viewed the politics of the union, as was later also revealed in the status of Maria on Peter's seals as co-extensive ruler of Bulgaria with joint authority. It seems she may well have been referred to formally as "mistress of Bulgaria"; ibid, 142-3.

[626] Obolensky (1971), 159. Whittow takes a view of the treaty more favourable to the Bulgars, that Romanos I was keen to avoid conflict on two fronts and the price for quiescence on Peter's part was the imperial marriage, the tribute and an independent patriarchate. Whittow (1996), 292. Shepard takes the view that tensions remained bubbling below the surface and what the union bought for Byzantium was time to consolidate its position. Shepard (1995), 149. It is clear from the *DAI* that the marriage alliance was not universally favourably viewed within Byzantium, indeed Constantine VII asserts it was considered unseemly and contrary to canon law and custom through all levels of Byzantine society. *DAI* 13/ 167ff. The "filial relationship" did not outlast Peter's reign, indeed the subsidy was peremptorily halted in 965 soon after the death of Maria and hostilities were resumed.

[627] Obolensky notes that the Bulgarian patriarch's see was in Silistria on the Danube and not at Preslav where it might have been more appropriately sited. His explanation for this is that it demonstrated the subservient position the Bulgar church still had and that church and state were being deliberately kept separate by Constantinople to reduce the opportunities of the latter on the former to the Constantinopolitan see's disadvantage. Obolensky (1971), 158.

[628] Ibid, 383-4.

The eastern part of Peter's realm became convulsed by regular Magyar invasions in 934, 943, 958 and 962 reaching, in 934, as far as Debeltos.[629] In 941 the Petchenegs pillaged the region. As Whittow has noted these were the raids recorded. It is possible there were many others.[630] The degree to which the Bulgar state had become weakened since Symeon's time is shown by Peter's steps to negotiate a treaty in 965 with the German ruler Otto the Great to protect his northern boundaries.[631] At this time, however, Otto was more interested in cementing ties with Byzantium to which aim, in 968, he had despatched Liudprand of Cremona to seek a marriage alliance.[632] Khan Peter's hold on his state was not helped by disaffection within the ranks of the boyars and local magnates that resulted in separatist rule occurring in the western Macedonian mountains.[633] There is evidence, during his reign, of the development of a "feudal" order and a diffusion of power among local magnates.[634] This development may well have been accelerated by the expense and turmoil associated with Symeon's wars.

The Rus' were also raiding along the coast. The great attack by sea on Constantinople in 941 is recorded. As with the Magyar raids it is possible there were other raids that resulted in pillage of the coastal cities in Bulgaria that did not figure in Byzantine records, whose compilers seemed singularly uninterested in what happened to their

[629] Browning (1975), 69.
[630] Whittow (1996), 293. He considers that none of these "need have been very serious" for Bulgaria. Whilst they did not threaten the state's survival or integrity they would most certainly have been the cause of damage to fortifications and infrastructure in the regions these raiders passed through.
[631] Ibid, 294.
[632] Ibid.
[633] Browning (1975), 69.
[634] Ibid, 68-69. Obolensky (1971), 161.

neighbour unless it directly impacted upon imperial interests.[635] As the *DAI* makes clear the descent of the Rus' into the Black Sea was an annual event.[636]

In 965 a raid that affected the empire's interests occurred. The eastern region of Bulgaria was ravaged by the Rus' under Svyatoslav.[637] From 969 to 971 the whole of the eastern Bulgarian area south of the Danube and almost to the gates of Constantinople was affected. Cities were captured, citizens butchered (as witness the fate of the citizens of Philippopolis) and much damage caused.[638] So great was the threat that John Tzimiskes rapidly raised a force of crack troops to stem the tide in Thrace in 970.[639]

When Byzantine forces marched from Adrianople to Preslav it seems that the Rus' had substantially withdrawn their forces there,[640] but it is likely, from the evidence of their behaviour at Philippopolis, they would have pillaged as they went. It is entirely possible that Mesembria and other Bulgar coastal settlements suffered in some way at the hands of the Rus'. Although the city was not on direct land routes and may, therefore have escaped depredations at the hands of the Magyars and Pechenegs, it was susceptible to attack from the sea and, as the raid of 941 showed, the Rus' had significant naval resources. It is possible that damage to churches may have occurred in Mesembria similar to that suffered by Amastris also at their hands.

[635] Browning (1975), 70.
[636] *DAI* 9.
[637] LD, V: 1, (Talbot & Sullivan p. 128).
[638] LD, VI: 10, (Talbot & Sullivan p. 155).
[639] LD, VI: 11- 13, (Talbot & Sullivan pp. 157-161).
[640] LD, VII: 2-5, (Talbot & Sullivan pp. 177-180).

By contrast the western part of the Bulgar state, centred upon Ohrid and Prespa (including Kastoria) was relatively untouched. As Whittow has observed, the campaigns of John Tzimiskes were not directed against the whole of Bulgar territory. His focus was upon the eastern territories and the western zone was left alone and to the leadership of local magnates.[641] Later, under Samuel, there was a resurgence of Bulgar confidence and some success obtained in acquiring territory until a final denouement around 1014 at the hands of Basil II.[642]

What are the implications of these events for building in Mesembria? Bulgar building in Symeon's reign, as we have seen, was inspired by current Constantinopolitan models as may be expected, having regard to Symeon's forceful expression of his destiny to lead the Orthodox world. Such inspiration can be seen not only in foundation forms but also in surface embellishments from expressive pilasters to saw-tooth cornicing. Furthermore the masonry was typically in roughly coursed stone. The example of the Panaghia at Skripou shows that the structural form of St. John was part of the repertoire of builders for the Byzantine elite in the third quarter of the ninth century. Skripou and the churches of Kastoria also confirm that external decorative embellishment had already, by the end of the ninth century, begun to be expressed in a variety of forms and, what is more, in each case, in a manner confident and expressive.

[641] Whittow (1996), 296-7. After 971 seals show that the Preslav area became the centre of a Byzantine province. Danube forts were strengthened against the Rus'. Holmes has shown that it is difficult to track the events between the destruction of the eastern part of the Bulgar state centred on Preslav in 971 and the collapse of Byzantine authority there in the early years of Basil II when it is possible Byzantium actually lost control of central Bulgaria ca. 986 and, thereafter, there was a significant enhancement of Bulgar fortunes until ca. 1000. Holmes (2005), 401-2 and ch. 8 (448-543)..

[642] Ibid, 387-90. Whittow questions the historicity of the source, Skylitzes' *Synopsis historian*, 348-349, for the battle of Kleidion. Holmes notes that Kleidion was not, in any event, conclusive and a further four years were to elapse before the ultimate surrender. Holmes (2005), 499-500.

On the basis of those criteria there seems no impediment to considering St. John as a product of the last quarter of the ninth century and, having regard to the rudeness of the embellishment, perhaps somewhat earlier than Skripou and the Kastorian churches. It is certainly possible that Symeon would have extended his building programme to major cities wrested from the empire and where Greek populations were still settled, to reveal to such populations his Orthodox credentials and to demonstrate an ability to match metropolitan building.

The building could, of course, be equally a product of Peter's reign, as is suggested by the surviving evidence of buildings in Preslav taken together with the building surge known to have taken place. The surge seems to have mainly been associated with monasteries and places of pilgrimage and the spread of Orthodoxy into the heartland of Bulgaria. There is, however, no record of monastic establishments in Mesembria for this period. There is nothing in St John's form such as separate chapel zones that would point strongly to a monastic use.

A consideration of masonry may supply additional clues. The masonry of St John is, in the main, irregular stone and other material mixed with fragments of brick. In the drum, however, it is of *opus mixtum* of four to five courses of brick and courses of stone. Elsewhere brick is used sparingly in aperture heads and cornicing. Only in the dominating feature of the drum is brick most in evidence.

Brick is, therefore, reserved for zones of importance, the saw tooth cornicing, aperture arches and the drum, where the *opus mixtum* form is most clearly displayed, and for zones of embellishment, the entrances and apses where decoration will be most

readily seen. Elsewhere the brick used is of random fragments inserted and interspersed with such other material that may be to hand (such as marble fragments).

The construction seems to reveal a poverty of material supply. Bricks do not seem to be readily available save as spoils from other areas – possibly spoil piles left after the 864 -894 works. Although, as Săsălov has noted, Mesembria once produced its own bricks,[643] the facilities for production of new ones are absent. This could be because of an absence of a skill base but it is more likely because of an inability to access suitable quarries for appropriate sand and clay. The necessary skills to build in both stone and brick were present as witness the confidence expressed in the articulation of the drum as well as the vaulting in the structure as a whole. It is not easy to build in random rubble and crudity of materials does not reflect absence of skills.

Brick is expensive to produce. Its production requires a ready supply of appropriate sand and clay deposits and the facilities (ovens) for the production as well as the skill base to produce them. The extent of the skills and facilities needed are revealed in the *DAI.* The Khazars had neither for the construction of their city. Skills needed to be exported from Constantinople and ovens had to be erected on site.[644] Even if the materials had been available, it was less costly to build in mortared rubble.[645] The overall impression of the masonry of St John is that it was constructed from brick, stone and spoil quarried from ruins within the city and that building materials were, at the time generally hard to come by.

[643] Săsălov (1980), 192.
[644] *DAI* 42/119.
[645] Epstein (1980), 200.

The paucity of material supply could hardly relate to the early years of Peter's rule but it could have been characteristic of the later years particularly after 965. St. John does not, however, have the appearance of a structure erected at a time when the city was under threat. The years of Magyar and Rus' raiding and the period after 965 were times when such a threat did exist. St. John was built at a time of civil stability and that is more suggestive of Symeon's time. Notwithstanding the near presence of the border for a time the city was not a focus for hostilities. The effect of Symeon's wars with Byzantium would have been to hinder the sourcing and transporting of material either of freshly quarried limestone or appropriate material for brick making. On balance I consider the weight of the evidence to favour the period of Symeon's reign if St. John was a Bulgar construction.

(b) The period after 971.

As to the period following the reconquest of John Tzimiskes it is likely that fresh building in regions close to the capital, particularly in an important Black Sea port, would reflect closely then current Constantinopolitan forms both in layout (the four point cross-in-square) and external display (an increased modelling of surfaces). The nearest, chronologically, is the Theotokos church at H. Loukas dated to the 960s.[646] That structure evidenced a Constantinopolitan export of form (four-column cross-in-square) to southern Greece where it was decorated exuberantly and confidently with saw-tooth bands, cloisonné brickwork and newly introduced Kufic lettering.[647]

[646] Krautheimer (1986), 383 and 508 n. 45. Vokotopoulos (1989), 213.
[647] Ousterhout (1999), 26-7. Ćurčić notes that the flat nature of the facades of the Theotokos was at variance with then contemporary Constantinopolitan monuments as were the display features (cloisonné, pseudo-Kufic brick patterns etc. He also adds, however, that the blind arch and associated supporting pilasters outlining the southern cross-arm (like St. John, having no structural function).

Nothing in that description can be said to be suggestive of St. John and would seem to point away from at least a Constantinopolitan influence at the end of the tenth century. It is difficult to envisage what other influence would have played a part.

A Constantinopolitan influence would certainly be expected for the mid- to the late-eleventh century when work was carried out in the city sponsored by Constantine X and Eudokia (1059-67) as evidenced by a partially preserved inscription referring to restoration of the walls of Mesembria.[648] Another inscription refers to the reconstruction of the walls of Andrianople by Constantine X and his son Michael VII (1071 -78).[649] It seems that extensive works of repair to fortifications were taking place in the last half of the eleventh century in lands recovered from the first Bulgarian empire. Some forty years after Bulgar submission to Basil II does, however, seem a long period elapsing before repairs are attended to.

Such directly imperially sponsored building, where it involved churches, was likely to introduce elements of then current Constantinopolitan features. By then churches in Constantinople were characterised by a multiple recession of planes and a lively expression of forms through buttressing and arches.[650] The churches were invariably domed (sometimes with multiple domes), had polygonal apses, arched niches and extensive decorative brickwork.[651] All such characteristics were brought together in a confident and coherent manner. A further Constantinopolitan feature by then was also

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similarly did not point in the direction of the capital. Ćurčić (2010), 299. I do not consider that assertion to be sustainable. The feature can be seen in the Myrelaion.

[648] Velkov (1969), 216-217, no. 43.

[649] Ibid, 218-219.

[650] Krautheimer (1986), 361-2.

[651] Ibid. *Cloisonné* masonry, previously characteristic only of Greek churches, also then appears in churches in the capital as witness the church of Christ Pantepoptes (Eski Imaret Camii) (1081-87). Metropolitan building is itself being influenced by other developments in other regions. Ibid.

the recessed brick.[652] These forms were not restricted to the capital but had been readily exported to Asia Minor (Çanlikilise)[653] and to Greece as well as to the newly converted Rus' capital, Kiev. There is no aspect of St. John that can be readily associated with any of those features. It is assuredly not representative of metropolitan building of the mid- to the late-eleventh century.

It is likely, therefore, on balance, that Mesembria was supplied with its church in the new formulation at the time of the surge of building of the reign of Symeon. It is the period during which all the identifiable facets of St John blend most appropriately with the historical realities.

It is reasonable therefore, to place its construction between the years 894 to 927 and, coincidentally thereby contemporary with the early buildings of Kastoria. In doing so, however, we are faced with the difficulty of explaining the apparent absence of the dissemination of patterns and styles of surface embellishment between the two regions of the Bulgar state. The surface embellishment, in limited form at Mesembria, differs markedly from that at Kastoria.

Peter's reign may have been a period when the eastern and western regions of Bulgaria grew apart under the influence of the combined effects of the Magyar and Rus' raids and the growth, in the west, of the power of local magnates. That process

[652] Ibid, 354.
[653] Ramsay and Bell (1909), 412 noted that the mortar beds were wider than the bricks themselves. Krautheimer considers that the masonry is either recessed brick or imitation of it. Krautheimer (1986), 399. Ousterhout also considers that Çanlikilise was a case of imitation as it was at the Koimesis, Nikaia. Ousterhout (1999), 179. He saw the presence of true recessed brick as evidence of the movement of workshops associated with the capital. With regard to the issue of external display the presence of "pseudo" recessed brick is surely indicative of the spread of Constantinopolitan features and evidence that decorative styles are not necessarily linked with workshop practices but of wider avenues for the transmission of cultural influence.

might indeed have started earlier than his reign as evidenced by the differences between the Kastorian churches and St. John. One of the reasons for the non-transmission of forms may have been the barrier created by the turmoil of Symeon's military operations. The two regions seem to have developed architecturally separately but in tandem with each other.

Kastoria and its neighbouring Byzantine territories were clearly exchanging decorative architectural forms and motifs in the late ninth and early tenth centuries and it should not be a surprise to find the same dynamic at work between the eastern Bulgarian territories and Byzantine Thrace and the capital. What is clear is that the exchange takes place in a highly localised manner. Despite Bulgar overlordship, local traditions are strong, pervasive and tenacious and this combines with an eager reception of Byzantine influences available locally.[654]

3.3.2. St Stephen

3.3.2.1 Idiosyncrasies of the structure.

There are many aspects of the building that signpost a building period later than that of St John, from the masonry to the variety of forms of external display. Ascertaining a more exact time is not an easy task because of the structure's idiosyncrasies.

[654] A recent discusion and current bibliography on Kastoria can be found in Ćurčić (2010), 313-315 and 857. Both Kastoria and Mesembria demonstrate how tenacious locally derived forms and decoration become after their ninth century genesis even when political controls changed. The Kastorian forms continued well into the twelfth century as witness H. Nikolaos tou Kasnitze, built by a Byzantine *magistros*. In Mesembria we have seen (p….above) how elements of external display persist in the fourteenth century. Ćurčić (2010), 381-3 (for Kastoria). See also ibid, 619-624 for a discussion of the late Byzantine monuments of Mesembria.

For all those idiosyncrasies the church has received surprising little attention.[655] What has been done places the church within a period of the tenth to the eleventh centuries. That period is marked, in the history of the region, by some dramatic events: the reign of Symeon and its turmoil, the recovery of the Black Sea coast by Byzantium, and the total collapse of the first Bulgarian empire at the hands of Basil II followed then by the recorded acts of renovation at the hands of Constantine X and Eudokia. Any one of those events may have influenced the choices made by the builder. Săsălov, in a brief note on the church, observes that, upon a traditional base, there were expressed, in this church, the regional tendencies of several regions intertwined, Byzantium, Pliska, Kastoria and, from the West, Lombardy.[656] While Săsălov was certainly correct that the church displays features derived from a variety of traditions there has been little or no attempt to explain how and when this may have occurred.

Although at first glance the building has little in common with St John there are a number of aspects by which the two structures can, in fact, be related, namely the basic foundation plan, the use of flat pilaster strips to enliven walls, the four point inner support structure, brick work reserved for decorative effects (mainly in upper registers), crowning apertures and the forming of saw tooth bands (restricted to eaves levels), and a limited number of windows.

A number of these shared features would suggest the existence of a basic building tradition in the city revealing itself in the laying out of foundation, in wall

[655] See TIB 6, 594 for a summary of scholarship up to 1991. There has been nothing of significance published since. It is surprising, having regard to its peculiarities, it was not discussed, or even referenced, by Ćurčić in his recent work particularly since certain elements of external display (glazed pots particularly) that became such a feature of the later Mesembrian churches, make, it seems, their first appearance in St. Stephen.
[656] Săsălov (1981), 347-8.

construction and apse design, all of which are applied as a matter of general practice rather than deliberate design choice. They are aspects that are subdued in relation to the more dramatic forms and motifs of display and it is in those that stark differences with St John are evident.

The most obvious difference is that St Stephen is not domed. There is also a significant difference in the masonry which comprises, primarily, large squared limestone blocks laid to single courses. Bricks are used sparingly within the general masonry, mainly to level and fill the occasional vertical gap between the blocks. There is no brick patterning or cloisonné.

Decorative effects are mainly achieved by the plastic moulding of surfaces, from the shaped gables to the niches in clerestory walls and the arched corbel tables on the apses. Surface elaboration is present through the insertions of glazed pottery. There appears to have been a deliberate choice on the part of the builder to create a structure distinctly different from St. John yet relating back to more ancient forms. Furthermore there is nothing in St Stephen that enables it to be readily associated with other forms either in the Balkan peninsula or, indeed, elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire. In this structure Mesembria persists in maintaining a development separate from that of the remainder of the Balkan peninsula.

Despite the seeming relationship with basilicas of Kastoria, St Stephen differs markedly from them in foundation layout and decorative forms. As has already been discussed the decorative effect in the Kastorian churches is one primarily of surface

embellishment and, save for the pottery inserts, this is singularly absent from St Stephen.[657]

Nor would it seem that St Stephen is partaking in developments associated with the building of the Theotokos church at H. Loukas. There is no cloisonné, brick patterning nor extensive use of saw tooth string courses. In so far as the Theotokos church is said to represent then Constantinopolitan elements St Stephen does not seem to be associated with the capital either. Having said that, some aspects of Constantinopolitan building can be discerned in St Stephen.

(a) Gable ends

At first glance the shaped gables terminating the pitched roof are a surprising idiosyncrasy that cannot be readily discerned anywhere else in Byzantine architecture. They are, however, on reflection, reminiscent of the arched gables terminating the vaulting of the north and south of cross arms of Constantinopolitan churches where the roof over the vaulting is shaped to the vault rather than covered by a pitched roof. This seems to be the form on the Myrelaion and it is evident in other areas e.g. the Great Lavra, Mount Athos and the west bays of the Panaghia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki.[658] This form of roofing was not adopted in the Balkans or Greece where pitched roofs appeared to be the norm as witness the Theotokos church, H. Loukas (and the later Katholikon), the Panaxiotissa, Gavrolimni and the Holy Apostles, Athens.[659] Indeed the latter is the form in St John in Mesembria.[660]

[657] See above, pp. 150, 155.
[658] See, for images of both, Krautheimer (1986), 374-5.
[659] Krautheimer (1986), 382, fig. 337 for H. Loukas; Dufrenne (1981), 363, figs 3 and 4 for the Panaxiotissa; Franz (1971), plate 8 for the Holy Apostles.

The gables of St Stephen appear to suggest termini of a barrel vaulted roof in a Constantinopolitan form notwithstanding that the evidence is that St Stephen was never vaulted but was roofed in timber.[661]

(b) Blind apertures and niches.

The niches at St Stephen are highly unusual. As well as being rectangular each contains three "piers" of brick creating what appear to be false mullions each with a triangular profile.

Niches are, again, a characteristic of Constantinopolitan churches. They are a feature, for example, on the Myrelaion in the form of arched blind lunettes in the attic zone of the north, south and east walls of the pastophoria.[662] They occur again in the Panghia ton Chalkeon[663] and also in late Constantinopolitan monuments such as those arranged about the apses of the Pantokrator, Christ Pantopoptos and Gül Camii (the last also adorned with short corbel table supported arches in triple windows on the ground floor).[664] Niches seem to have been a feature of Constantinopolitan building from the tenth century and exported to Thessaloniki. A further element of note in the Myrelaion is that the drum is articulated by triangular projecting buttresses[665]

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[660] It would appear the moulded, rounded form of roof became standard in Thessaloniki as witness H. Katherini, in Mistra, H. Theodori and also in central Asia Minor as witness a church at Çanlikilise, Hassan Dağ; Ramsay and Bell (1909), 406-7, figs. 332 and 333. It appears also to have become standard in Serbia and in Rus', having been exported there directly from Constantinople. It is a form that also is applied to thirteenth and fourteenth century building in Mesembria itself (the Pantokrator and the Archangels; see figs 52, 53 & 54).
[661] Săsălov (1981), 346.
[662] Striker (1981), 20-1.
[663] Krautheimer (1986), 374, fig. 329.
[664] Ibid, 361-369, figs 315, 321 and 322.
[665] Striker (1981), 22 and plate 34. Krautheimer (1986), 356, fig. 308.

reminiscent of the form of the "false mullions" in the St. Stephen niches. As an ornamental feature that also seems to emanate from the capital.

As well as the niches on the clerestory walls, on the west gable of St Stephen is a blind triple arcaded window with half arches over the side windows. The whole is then recessed within a larger arch. That form appears on the Katholikon of H. Loukas and other Constantinopolitan structures of the eleventh century.[666] This feature of St Stephen is not replicated on the east gable where there is a simple grouping of three windows all fully arched and simply inserted into the façade as in other buildings in the Balkans (e.g. the Panaghia at Skripou)[667]. The west gable window arrangement appears to have been mere decoration with "mullions" crudely formed by vertically inserted ashlars, the enclosed spaces then filled with blocks of limestone similar to the general masonry of the church.

Other elements of St Stephen seem, however, to have no place in the build traditions of the capital or of the Balkan peninsula generally.

(a) Corbel tables

These are a novel introduction. The blind arcades crowning the drum at St John are not supported by corbels but project directly from the façade.

[666] Krautheimer (1986), 365.
[667] For an image see Krautheimer (1986), 313, fig. 276.

Corbel supported arches appear in the Panaghia ton Chalkeon in a somewhat limited manner in the windows of the drums over the narthex.[668] Their full expression, by the tenth century, is to be found at some distance, however, in the first Romanesque style emanating from Lombardy.[669] The style spreads from Milan to southern France. In the monastery of Ripoll (1020-32) the very distinctive church of St Maria (1020-32) was adorned with shallow arched corbel tables crowning all of its seven apses.[670] The style also found its way to Germany at St Pantaleon (966 -80), a foundation of Otto the Great and his son Otto II. Here the arches have voussoir patterns and they rest upon unadorned corbels.[671] The resemblance to those at St. Stephen is close and, as we shall see, that may be significant.[672]

(b) Glazed pottery inserts

The development of this feature as an external decorative element is difficult to trace. It may well be a peculiarly local development. Certainly the thirteenth and fourteenth century churches of Mesembria are embellished with multiple bands of these (figs 50 to 53).

The insertion of ceramic pottery in quatrefoil shape is not limited to Mesembria. It appears in unglazed form over the apertures of the Kilise Mescidi in Amasra (figs 34 and 37). Such ceramic pots also feature in much later Byzantine building. It is quite possible, as Millet has suggested, that they formed the same enhancing role that the

[668] For an image see Mango (1985), 114, fig. 166.
[669] Conant (1978), 107.
[670] Ibid, 116-7.
[671] Ibid, 119 and 123.
[672] See below, pp. 194-5.

saw tooth bands played in the Kastorian and Greek School churches, a feature that arose in the late ninth century.[673]

There has been no recent study of the incidence of this decorative form. The technology to produce the bowls was available to the Bulgar builders. The earliest church (indeed any) structure on which it has been found was Church No.3, Preslav, dateable to the end of the ninth century or to the tenth.[674] There is no reason why the form could not have then spread throughout the Bulgar territories in the tenth century. The use of these glazed elements may have been linked to the production, known to have occurred, of ceramic tiles in Preslav.[675] Glazed tiles with a variety of geometric patterns were uncovered at the site of the Round Church for both internal and external wall embellishment, including as (internal) cornice facings.[676] Ceramic tiles as paving were found elsewhere in the Preslav area.[677] In any event the occurrence of the glazed bowl decoration in Byzantine (and the related Bulgar) architecture seems to have been contemporary with the use of reticulate tile revetment that, as we have seen, adorn the Koubelidiki, Kastoria and the Koimesis, Lambovo.[678]

Small glazed tiles with a Kufic inscription also adorn the cornice line of the Panaghia ton Chalkeon.[679] Here there seems to be a stylistic resemblance between the positioning of the Kufic patterns of the Greek churches and the positioning of the glazed inserts in Mesembria. The date for construction of the Panaghia post-dates the

[673] Millet (1916), 288.
[674] Megaw (1966a), 12, n. 11.
[675] Mijatev (1974), 92.
[676] Ibid. Alchermes (1997), 323-4 and cat. no. 223. The multitude of tiles found presupposes a workshop in the monastery complex of which the Round Church formed part producing tiles for other buildings, and thus, potentially, for export. Ćurčić (2010), 288-9.
[677] Mijatev (1974), 107.
[678] Megaw (1966a), 18-20.
[679] Mango (1985), 115.

existence of the production site of ceramic tiles in the Bulgar state (and indeed the Bulgar state itself). It may be, therefore, that there was, in Thessaloniki, a production source for glazed work. The trading routes between Black Sea ports and Thessaloniki were strong and, indeed, it is possible that the movement by Leo VI of administrative control of Black Sea trade to Thessaloniki had a part to play in the first war between Symeon and the Byzantine Empire.[680]

3.3.2.2. Dating and historical context

It is clear from the foregoing that St Stephen incorporates an eclectic mix of formerly unrelated forms. It may be that a direct precursor or prototype may have existed in Bulgar building but this is impossible to confirm because so little survives beyond foundations. The church of St Sophia in Ohrid, dateable possibly to the ninth century but subject to later reconstruction, has blind niches in the upper registers of the main apse but that may have been part of an eleventh-century reconstruction as may be the recessed windows in the lower register. The highly individual Round Church at Preslav may have taken some inspiration from the Myrelaion with its semi-cylindrical buttressing but there is nothing in what survives of the former to relate it to St Stephen.

Although the overall appearance of St Stephen is striking, there is a lack of coherence between its various elements. There is no feature that binds all the elements together. Different aspects are applied to different surfaces. Even the detail on the two gables differs. The builders of St Stephen seemed to have been feeling their way with some

[680] Whittow (1996), 286. Whittow is not convinced that a trade dispute was the cause but was more likely a result of Symeon flexing his muscles following his recent (893) accession.

novel architectural forms with, as mentioned before, an overriding aim to create a new signature building. Execution is relatively crude as witness the insertion of white limestone blocks in the upper registers of the east gable that detracts from the overall colourific effect.[681] It begs the question: what may have been driving the builders to such experimentation with a diversity of forms?

It is possible the church was a product of the building of the reign of Khan Peter. It could be that his marriage to Maria Lekapena facilitated the introduction of the Constantinopolitan details into St Stephen, combined with elements such as the glazed bowls already available at Preslav. The use of corbel tables as we see them at St. Stephen seems to have been a late tenth-century development but absent from then current metropolitan building. That seems to preclude the possibility of St. Stephen being built under Constantinoplitan influence before 969 (the end of Peter's reign).

After 972, and the Byzantine annexing of eastern Bulgaria, a period of permanent calm descends on the eastern part of the former Bulgar state. Such a time would have been one when resources for building would have been available and traffic to and from Constantinople facilitated. Furthermore, as discussed above in relation to St. John, there may also have been a period of necessary reconstruction because of harm inflicted by the Rus'.

There may be a further reason why the building in Mesembria took place immediately after 972. When John Tzimiskes expelled the Rus' he portrayed himself as the saviour

[681] The surface might have been painted, covering the masonry. For the same reasons advanced to suggest that was not tenable for St. John (p. 140) apply here. The decorative effect of the mixed brick and stone was recognised for the later Mesembrian churches. The earlier churches supplied the models of inspiration.

and liberator of all the inhabitants of the region (both Bulgars and Greeks).[682] That he was seen in such a light is evident from the triumphalism that attended his return. It is likely that his triumphal procession in Constantinople was simply the culmination of a like progress through the reconquered territories.[683] As Whittow has noted, his return to the capital was "carefully stage managed to produce maximum political capital".[684] The populations of those territories may have been expected to demonstrate gratitude for their deliverance. They would have had no doubt that they were witnessing an exultant new overlord. Khan Boris (Peter having died) was clearly under "honourable detention" as part of the baggage Tzimiskes was taking back to Constantinople. On reaching the capital he was rapidly stripped of the trappings of tsardom.[685] The citizens of Mesembria would, one feels, have been under some pressure, being of a former Bulgar port of importance, to show their appreciation and submission to the new order. Furthermore Tzimiskes did cause at least one building of which we have a record to be built as a monument to celebrate his victory, the church of Christos tes Chalkites related to the Chalki Gate of the Great Palace.[686]

A further element relating to Tzimiskes is relevant to the discussion. In 972 he facilitated the marriage of Theophano (his niece) to Otto II and she moved to Cologne where she was then active in the patronage of church building and in particular St Pantaleon, where she was ultimately buried.[687] Not only was Tzimiskes concerned to demonstrate legitimacy for a reign of dubious beginnings but also to prove imperial

[682] LD, VII: 6, (Talbot & Sullivan p. 182); VII: 8, (Talbot & Sullivan p. 183); IX: 12, (Talbot & Sullivan p. 200). See also Ostrogorsky (1940), 296.
[683] LD, IX: 12, (Talbot & Sullivan pp. 200-1).
[684] Whittow (1996), 296.
[685] LD, IX: 12, (Talbot & Sullivan p. 201).
[686] Ćurčić (2010), 277.
[687] McClendon (2005), 201. She is also said to have provided funds for the completion of St. Cyriacus, Gernrode; Conant (1978), 123.

credentials by re-uniting the empire from Bulgaria to the West. The combination of Constantinopolitan, Bulgar and Ottonian elements in St. Stephen is almost a metaphor for that assertion.

The connection with the Ottonian Empire survived the brief six year reign of John Tzimiskes. Theophano herself died in 991 but Basil II, in 1002, dispatched his niece Zoë to be the wife of Otto III (the son of Theophano).[688] The marriage never took place but, until then, there was real expectation of some union of the western and eastern empires. In such a climate it would not have been surprising for there to have been a transmission of cultural identities and Theophano's active involvement in building cannot be discounted, considering the extent to which architectural motifs and designs became shared. The flow of cultural material from Byzantium to the Ottonian Empire is amply revealed in the presence there of woven silks of the reign of Basil II including one introduced into the tomb of Charlemagne by Otto III.[689] Otto III was also instrumental in founding the monastery at Grottaferrata subject to the Eastern (Basilian) rule.[690] It is hard not to conclude that the introduction of the Romanesque corbel table must relate to this period of very close communication between the two empires.[691]

[688] Magdalino (2002), 179.
[689] Beckwith (1979), 217.
[690] Conant (1978), 352.
[691] Ćurčić, in discussing the fourteenth century church of St. John Aleiturgitos, dismisses a linkage between the corbel table feature on that structure and Western influences as "one of the many gross oversimplifications of a larger, complex problem". Ćurčić (2010), 624. He has, as previously noted, failed to consider St. Stephen and its place in the development of tenth-century Byzantine building and, therefore, not noted the appearance of this feature at this early stage nor then the possible explanations available. The Western connection at this juncture in Mesembria's history is hard to dismiss. He offers no solution himself to the idiosyncrasies of this remarkable building.

Could the structure be of a later date? As we know there is epigraphic evidence of late eleventh-century work in Mesembria sponsored by Constantine X.[692] The mid- to late-eleventh century would also have been a period of settled calm with open avenues for the transmission of forms and ideas from the capital. That said there seems little in St. Stephen that associates it with metropolitan building of that period, the more so if imperially sponsored. Whilst there is surface modelling in the apse arches and façade pilasters there is not the multiple recession of planes that are found then in metropolitan churches, nor elaborate brick patterns, cloisonné or Kufic.[693] Furthermore the Constantinopolitan details such as those in the west gable façade are simple and relatively undeveloped and more suggestive, thereby, of an earlier period. Nor should one ignore the fact that St. Stephen was built as a true basilica and not in the domed forms that had become standard by the mid-eleventh century. The thrust of the evidence supports a dating of between 972 and the first decade of the eleventh century.

As to why a basilical form was chosen it is tempting to look, once again, at the churches of Kastoria particularly the Taxiarchs and H. Stephanos. The similarities appear tempting but there are dissimilarities that speak as loudly. St. Stephen, Mesembria is a true, timber roofed, basilica with a clerestory; it is not barrel vaulted as the Taxiarchs and H. Stephanos are.[694] It terminates with three semi-circular apses unlike the single and polygonal forms in Kastoria. The differences with regard to the manner and forms of outside embellishment are clear and do not need repeating.[695] Furthermore the historical disconnection in development between the two parts of

[692] P. 182
[693] These comments have already been made in respect of St. John (pp. 181-3). They are equally applicable to St. Stephen.
[694] Epstein (1980), 190. As is the Koubelidiki and H. Anargyroi.
[695] Pp. 155-161.

Bulgar state cannot be forgotten. In seeking an answer as to why St Stephen was built as a basilica one cannot look to Kastoria.

What the Kastorian churches do demonstrate is the persistence of the basilical form. We have seen that persistence in Trebizond. Whilst the Kastorian churches and St. Anne, Trebizond are dated to the end of the ninth century or the start of the tenth we shall see, however, from evidence in Cherson, that the form persisted well into the tenth.[696] Perhaps we see a tenacious local tradition. Perhaps (and there is no evidence to support this) an attempt is being made to replicate, in part, the form of the Old Metropolis, a building long established and redolent of the importance of Mesembria as an ecclesiastical centre and as a city generally. The Old Metropolis may have suffered to such an extent through the conflicts of the last half of the tenth century (particularly by the Rus')[697] that it was prohibitively expensive to rebuild it (having regard to its scale). The Old Metropolis was (and still is) an imposing monumental structure in the city and may have had significance for the population.[698]

Historical context and external display.

The two churches of St. John and St. Stephen in Mesembria are of real interest. In their dimensions, internal arrangements of structure and basic foundation plans they are alike. Yet in terms of display, including major superstructure design, they are remarkably different. That said, even in their differences there are subtle commonalities in type and manner of expression of external display that associate the

[696] See Chapter IV, pp. 237-47.
[697] Pp. 176-7.
[698] By the middle Byzantine period monuments surviving from the early Christian, Justinianic and classical periods may have become imbued with elements of wonder and myth both because of size and age as well as association with the great imperial past. Ousterhout (2002), 51-56.

buildings with the capital and away from southern Greece and western Macedonia. There are complexities of expression revealed in structures that may be separated by barely eighty years. As with Amastris, the historical context not only assists in dating the structures more closely but also adds information as to the meaning and purpose for the displays and provides clues as to cultural and political interactions at the time of their repective constructions.

With St. John we have seen that its construction fits most neatly with the second period of Bulgar possession of the city, from 894 to 971, and of that, more closely with the reign of Symeon. After Symeon absorbed the city it became an important border post and a venue for high level diplomatic activity between two states in an almost perpetual state of aggression. For Byzantium it was a highly visible and constant reminder of the Bulgar ruler's expansionist policies and political pretensions in repect of the Orthodox world. For Symeon it must have presented an opportunity to display his credentials both as secular ruler and Orthodox adherent to friend and foe alike.

That he was adept at producing monumental architecture with references to Constantinopolitan imperial authority can hardly be doubted when considering the remarkable Round Church in the new capital at Preslav. The more prosaic church architecture in that city also reveals the affinity with that of the imperial capital. The hallmarks, in terms of display, of surface articulation and most particularly "pseudo-structural" pilasters are those present in St. John. From what we can deduce about Symeon and his attitude towards Byzantium it can hardly be doubted he would not have undertaken demonstrable architectural work in Mesembria. The basic form of St.

John, support on four wall piers, visible cross vaulting, fully developed tripartite sanctuary with triple apse together with a tall drum are all to be found in the architecture of Constantinople associated with its elite both there and in the Balkan peninsula (e.g. the Panaghia at Skripou) from the mid-ninth century.[699] It would not be a surprise to find that form chosen for display in Mesembria.

That the elements of display (surface articulation and placement of ornament dictated by structural form) also follow Constatinopolitan practice is likewise unsurprising. The difference in manner of display between the eastern and western portions of the Bulgar state is worthy of comment. As we have seen at the end of the ninth century and the start of the tenth Byzantine architecture in the Balkan peninsula was showing signs of separate developments out of a shared cultural heritage, "regional dialects".[700] This was taking place across the Byzantine influenced world, not just within the empire's borders but also in adjoining polities, albeit recently established, like Bulgaria. The development was not, therefore, one arising because of current divisive strife but from the circumstances of the seventh century that saw an "utter decline and near disappearance of the (imperial or centrally inspired) building trade"[701] followed by a recovery under which local or regional workshops operated and transmitted forms and designs. Those "regions" were not respecters of political boundaries and Kastoria in Bulgaria shared forms of external display (surface ornament on unarticulated surfaces) with southern Greece. We see in St.John an example of architecture developed within a region of Bulgaria associated with that of its political capital and ultimately drawing inspiration from Constantinople used for

[699] See, for a recent summary of the architecture of the ninth and tenth centuries, Ćurčić (2010), ch. 6 and particularly271-7 and 315-318.
[700] Ćurčić (2010), 342-343.
[701] Ibid, 343. As the example of the choice by the Bulgar state of Symeon of the cross-in-square form for churches also demonstrates. Ibid, 332.

display of secular authority and Orthodox credentials. We also see it as representative of a local "dialect" within the Bulgar state itself and of the manner in which Byzantine architecture was developing from the ninth century.

That local dialect is detectable in St. Stephen in its basic form, shape and dimensions. With this church, however, the historical context is even more needed to address its pecularities of expression. So odd are they that Ćurčić, in his recent study, has ignored the building entirely. It does not fit at all neatly with the categorization he adopts for his discussion of Balkan architecture for the period.

The "local" tradition is evident in the application of external display. It is primarily through articulation of surfaces, and placement of ornament is regulated by major architectural forms. We saw that there was nothing that could relate the building to the Greek School represented by the Theotokos church at Hosios Loukas and later associated structures. Nor however were the peculiar forms of external embellishment (corbel tables, glaced inserts, shaped gables, decorative niches) seemingly to be found in the architecture of the capital. Other influences were clearly at work to produce a seemingly unique architectural expression.

Whilst some elements (gable ends and niches) can be seen to be potentially Constantinopolitan in inspiration, others (glazed pots and pseudo-structural pilasters) seem to have been part of the local "dialect" and indeed become highly developed signature forms for the late Byzantine monuments of Mesembria. The corbel tables, however, seem to have a Romanesqe, Western, feel. This eclectic mix of unrelated forms brought together in one small structure demands an explanation. There seems to

have been experimentation on the part of the builders, feeling their way to a signature building. The historical context of developments in the western region of the Bulgar lands in the last quarter of the tenth century supply a reasonable explanation. The re-conquest of the area by John Tzimiskes and his triumphal celebration of it, evidenced in both texts and architecture in the capital, reveals why there may have been a driving force in this important city, formerly displaying a Bulgar assertion of authority, to build a structure in which would be combined both Byzantine and local "dialectic" forms to demonstrate the emperor's claim to have re-united the *oikoumene*. The marriage of his niece to Otto II and an effort thereby to re-unite East and West provides a reasonable explanation for the transmission, indeed interchange, of cultural material between Byzantium and the West and thus the appearance peculiarly western architectural elements in Byzantine architecture, indeed seems the only reasonable explanation.

IV. THE THREE BLACK SEA CITIES: CHERSON, THE IMPERIAL OUTPOST (fig 66).[702]

1. Pre-medieval Cherson.

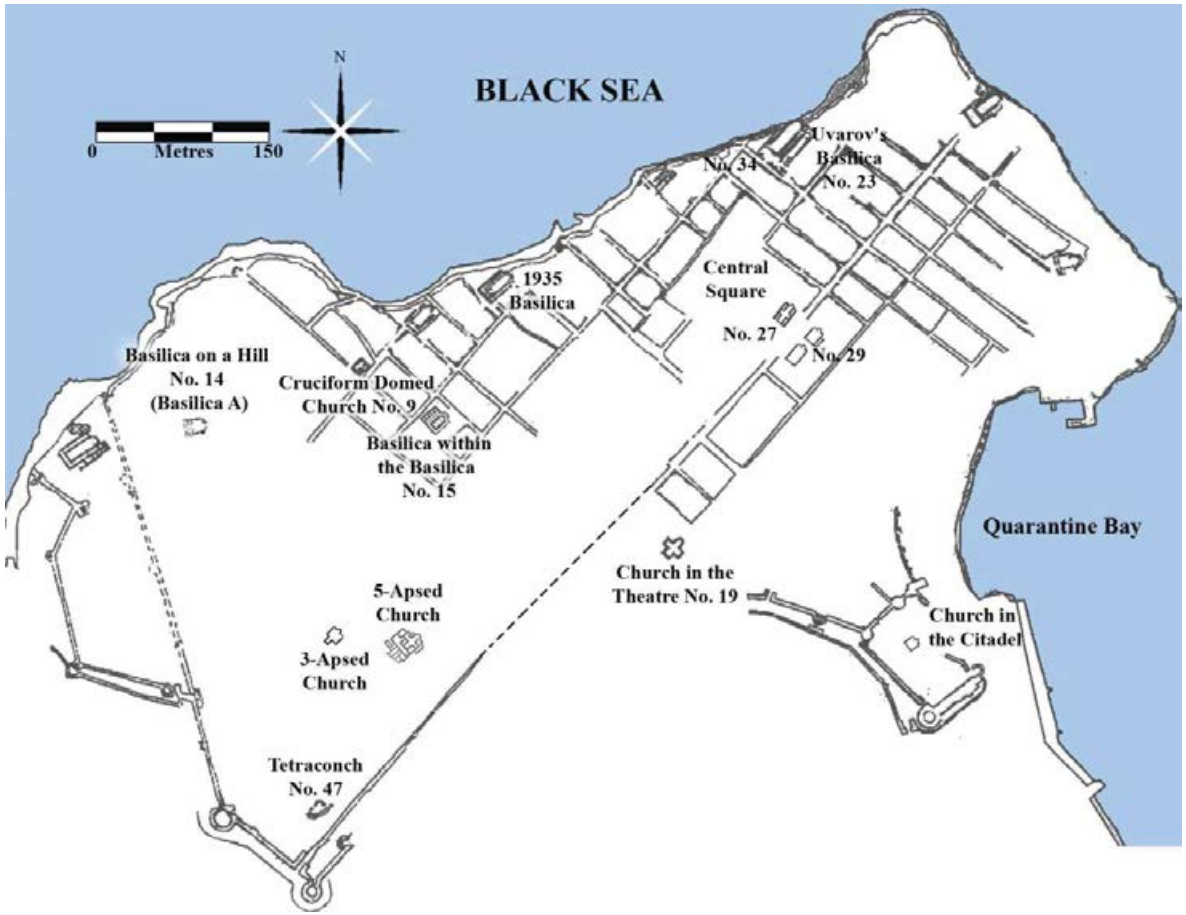
1.1. Original settlement and geographical position.

The historical site of Cherson (in the Classical period called Chersonesos) occupies a peninsula of ca. 26 ha adjoining the southwest edge of the modern city of Sebastopol.[703] It was founded by colonists from (Pontic) Heraklaia[704] on the opposite (Turkish) coast of the Black Sea in the fourth century BC.[705] The peninsula encloses a natural harbour, the modern Quarantine Bay, still a haven accessible to modern shipping of deep draught and shelter "from all winds".[706] The modern name of the site (Khersones Tavricheskii, a conservation preserve under state authority) recalls that the colony was built on land formerly inhabited by a Scythian people, the Tauri.[707]

Geographically, Cherson lies at almost the southern tip of the Crimea, a peninsular landmass of modern Ukraine projecting southwards into the Black Sea. The Crimea is linked to the mainland by a land bridge barely 9 km wide, rendering the region one readily defensible from the Eurasian steppe to the north, yet isolated and vulnerable to

[702] For the most recent and most comprehensive overview of Cherson in the Byzantine period with extensive extracts from relevant source material is Sorochan (2005), 3 vols. There is nothing comparable in any other language. For detailed summaries of various aspects of life in Byzantine Cherson with cross references to current (to 2000) archaeological excavations and a detailed bibliography of Russian, Ukraine and other scholarship see Romanchuk (2000). A more recent summary of archaeological and other work at Cherson and Crimea generally and with extensive bibliography, see Aibabin *et al*. (2003). A relatively recent short summary of the history and archaeology of Cherson in English can be found in Smedley (1978). On the creation of the theme of the Klimata see Naumenko (!997) and Zuckerman (1997).
[703] *Chersonesos* is Greek for peninsula.
[704] Strabo, 7. 4. 2.
[705] For recent summaries of the history of Greek settlement on the north Black Sea coast and the Crimea particularly, see Mack and Carter (2003) and Koromila (2002), 176-241. See also Zuckerman (1997), 210-222.
[706] Black Sea Pilot, 266-267. Ukrainian Navy ships enter this bay for berthing.
[707] Strabo, 7. 4. 2.

Figure 66.



Cherson.

siege unless relieved from the seaward side. The bulk of Crimea is flat and geographically part of the steppe, but to the south, extending almost the whole length of the south-east coast, the Doros Mountains, rising to in excess of a thousand meters,[708] leave a narrow coastal strip enjoying an almost Mediterranean microclimate.[709] This geography protects the coast from some of the worst of the steppe weather as well as providing a further significant physical barrier to attack. The steppe countryside was seen as inhospitable, classical geographers describing it as a waterless desert between the Danube and the Dniester, and Khazaria as a barren waterless place with desert east of the Tanais (Don).[710] Only the Crimean peninsula was an exception; here everything was said to be fertile.

Even at the best of times, its geographical location also meant that Cherson was always looking to the sea for its survival as a settlement. The rivers Prut, Dniester, Bug, Dnieper and Don, in a series of rough parallels, divide the steppe lands in their passage to the Black Sea and severely hindered land travel. An Arab traveller of the fourteenth century recounted that the land journey over territory then wholly within Ottoman control, from the Sea of Azov to the Dnieper, took fifty-two days, and a further twenty one to reach Constantinople.[711] A sea voyage from Constantinople to the Crimea could take fourteen or fifteen days.[712]

[708] The highest peak is Roman Kosh at 1,545 m.
[709] Black Sea Pilot, 68 (the area has been known as "the Russian Riviera"). See also *Weather in the Black Sea* (1963), 69 and also Smedley (1978), 175.
[710] Strabo, 7.3.14, 7.4.5.
[711] Mackintosh-Smith (2002), 129-30.
[712] Dimitroukas (1997), vol. 2, 442-444.

The Greek colonies on the Black Sea were concerned, from the outset, with maritime trade and important points along the shoreline for exchange had become well established by the time of Strabo. The Tanais River was recognised as the point where Europe and Asia met and nomads from all parts of the known world met at the mouth of the Sea of Azov to trade in slaves, hides, clothing and wine.[713]

The risks to the survival of the colony and its potential fragility in the absence of trade are revealed by the terms of the Oath of Chersonesos which remarkably survives from the late fourth or early third century BC on a marble stele.[714] The Oath forms the basis of a contractual bond between the individual citizen and the *polis*. As well as swearing not to disturb the political equilibrium, and to preserve the security of the city and its *chora*, the surrounding dependant countryside, the citizen specifically undertook to protect the grain gathered and stored for export. It is thought that the Oath was renewed annually as citizens came of age.[715] The Oath also revealed that the city was fortified against barbarians in the hinterland and faced aggressive competition from other Greek settlements. Despite those threats, the classical city expanded greatly in the third century BC, with an area of over fifty times the size of the walled city being its adjoining *chora*, divided into a grid of over four hundred plots of farmland to feed and support the city.[716]

Accidents of history and quality of building have resulted in some significant survivals from the city's early life, particularly in the southeast corner of the present site where not only portions of Classical walls are visible but also a number of

[713] Strabo, 7. 4. 5.
[714] A description, image and translation (by S. A. Zhebeleva) of the Oath are set out in Carter (2006), 19-30.
[715] Ibid, 26.
[716] Sorochan, Zubar and Marchenko (2001), 67-92, with a plan of the chora and its subdivisions at 68.

foundations of secular structures have been uncovered together with their interlinking street configurations. It is those street arrangements which reveal that the orthological grid pattern now visible in the remains of the medieval settlement was one of the remarkable survivals of the original Greek city and that it was essentially respected by the successor Roman and Byzantine builders. It resulted in a consistent local, "non-standard" orientation of Cherson's churches throughout the whole of the Byzantine era until the city's end, seemingly at the hands of the Tartars, in the last years of the fourteenth century.

1.2. Early Christian Cherson.

Cherson appears to have become Christianised at an early stage. It was a bishopric from the middle of the fourth century and seems to have actively participated in church affairs at high levels.[717] It was represented at the Second Council of Constantinople (553) and at the Council *in Trullo* (692).[718]

Its ecclesiastical status in this period is revealed by the number of large basilicas that are readily dateable, stylistically, to the fifth and sixth centuries. The largest of them, the so-called Uvarov's Basilica (No.23)[719] is almost 60m long (including the apse) and 25m wide. It has both a narthex and exo-narthex. Eight others range from 28m to 40m in length.[720] All are, as Buchwald has described the type, "simple three aisled

[717] Pülz (1998), 45.
[718] Walter (1978), 246.
[719] The remains of this church are named after Count Uvarov who investigated it in the nineteenth century. There is no evidence of the original dedication of this or any other remains in Cherson. They are almost all known through a numbering system. Two are referred to by the years in which they were investigated, "the 1932 Basilica" and "the 1935 Basilica".
[720] The Western Basilica (No. 13), 40m; the Basilica on a Hill (No. 14), 37m; Basilica No. 15, 27m; the Northern Basilica (No. 22), 25m; the Eastern Basilica (No. 36), 40m; the 1935 Basilica, 35m; the 1932

basilicas", but they easily rival, in size, structures erected in Asia Minor and Uvarov's is larger than the second largest there.[721] Most have polygonal (three or five sided) apses common to a great many Byzantine basilicas of the fifth and sixth centuries around the empire.[722] Others have rounded apses that seem to be a later form since the rounded apsed 1935 Basilica was built over an earlier, similar sized structure with a three-sided apse.[723]

Although the Cherson basilicas appear "standard" in form, a number reveal somewhat unusual 1:3 proportionality between aisle and nave that runs counter to the most common relationship of 1:2.[724] It seems that there may have been a degree of separateness of development in Cherson although it does not appear to have affected the form of church building in the surrounding region which remained in "standard" form.[725] Other forms are also built; a large tetraconch (No. 47), a triconch (Basilica "A") neighbouring Uvarov's Basilica and another, the Basilica Kruze (No. 7) in the western corner of the site.[726]

The most striking of all these buildings is Uvarov's, not only because of its size but also because of the assemblage of other structures associated with it, including a triconched baptistery connected by a wall, and an *opus sectile* pavement linking the

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Basilica, 30m; Basilica on the Central Square (No. 28), 28m. Descriptions, dimensions and bibliography for these are to be found in Romanchuk (2000), 222-228.

[721] Buchwald (1995), 19-30, particularly Tables 1 & 2 at p. 28.

[722] Examples: St. John of Studios, Constantinople (mid-fifth century), plan in Rodley (1996), 19 fig. 6; H. Sophia and H. Eirene, Constantinople (532-7 and 532 respectively); St.Appollinare, Classe (532/6-49), plan in Rodley (1996), 87 fig. 61; a church at Meriamlik (Asia Minor) (471-94), plan in Krautheimer (1986), 245 fig. 199; H. Titos, Gortyna (late sixth cent.), plan in ibid, 255 fig. 214; Sofia Cathedral (sixth/seventh cent.), plan in ibid, 256 fig. 216; the Old Metropolis, Mesembria (fig. 3[f]) and the so-called Great Basilica (sixth cent.), Butrint (Albania), plan in Bowden and Mitchell (2004), 106 fig. 7.2.

[723] Romanchuk (2000), 227.

[724] Buchwald (1995), 29 (Table 3).

[725] Romanchuk (2000), 79. Parshina (1988), 50.

[726] Romanchuk (2000), 228, 226, 222 respectively.

west entrance directly to the city grid. It has been argued, with some justification, that this complex was the ecclesiastical centre of the city and the bishop's palace.[727]

Thirteen sites in total of large scale church building have been attributed to the fifth and sixth centuries.[728] Such a scale in one place points to a period of some prosperity for the city and an expanding population. Proconnesian marble columns and capitals tell of imports direct from Constantinople and a close connection with the capital. The masonry of close fitting stone ashlar speaks of local workshops of some skill.[729]

The city's status and wealth is also confirmed by other archaeological evidence. The numerous tanks for the salting and preservation of fish that were scattered all over the city[730] together with large amounts of pottery strongly suggest a strong industry based on fisheries and production at levels for a thriving export trade across the Black Sea. Such was the volume of trade that between the reigns of Zeno (474-5) and Herakleios (610-41) Cherson minted its own coinage, a further significant indicator of status.[731]

The city's importance to imperial defence is revealed by the activities of Justinian I and Zeno. Zeno (474-91) undertook restoration work to the curtain walls and extending them in the harbour area and enhancing them with towers.[732] Justinian also paid particular attention to the walls both of Cherson and Bosporos (modern Kerch, also on the southern Crimean coast). It is reported that these had fallen greatly into

[727] Ibid, 66.
[728] Pülz (1998), 73.
[729] Ibid, 73-74.
[730] See Romanchuk (2000), fig. 12 for a map of over ninety such tanks uncovered up to the year 2000.
[731] Smedley (1978), 181. For details and catalogues of Chersonite coinage see Zolotarev and Kochetkova (1999), and for the early period, 76-80.
[732] Vasiliev (1936), 43-7.

disrepair notwithstanding the work of Zeno less than a century earlier. Justinian made them "remarkably beautiful and safe"[733] These works were part of his programme of strengthening defences around the whole of the Black Sea.[734]

A yet further indicator of status was the city's avowed association with a major Christian saint, St. Clement. St. Clement was the third successor to St. Peter to the see of Rome and was said to have been martyred by being thrown into the sea off Cherson with an anchor about his neck.[735] His feast was reported as established by the sixth century and was the focus, in the city, of annual rumbustious celebrations that evidently had become obsolete by the ninth century since it took a miracle at the hands of Cyril and Methodios to locate the saint's remains. It seems that the city's efforts to create for itself a pilgrimage site had faltered perhaps because of the city's remoteness from the heart of empire.[736]

Remoteness from the heartland made Cherson an attractive place for banishment from the early period, the fate that befell St. Clement and, in the seventh century, Pope Martin and, later in the century, Justinian II.[737] In 702/3 the future emperor Bardanes Philippikos was exiled there[738] as were, in 776, Caesars Nikephoros and Anthimos.[739]

Pope Martin complained of the lack of basic foodstuffs there, and that the inhabitants were pagan, the latter claim hardly sustainable in view of the large number of

[733] Prokopios, *Buildings* III. vii. 10-11.
[734] Ibid, 5-25.
[735] For details of St. Clement see Farmer (2003), 110.
[736] Walter (1978), 247 and 260.
[737] Theo, 332 & 369; Mango & Scott (1997), 462 and 515. For details of St. Martin see Farmer (2003), 352.
[738] Theo, 379; Mango & Scott (1997), 528.
[739] Theo, 451; Mango & Scott (1997), 621.

churches.[740] His complaints have been seen as evidence of privations consequent upon a breakdown of trade in the troubled periods of the seventh and eighth centuries (and the reliance of Cherson upon Black Sea shipping to supply them) and possibly of local famine as a result as well as a significant decline in the city's fortunes.[741] It has been noted that a relatively small amount of cultural material has been uncovered dateable from the seventh to the first half of the ninth century, particularly coinage.[742]

Such conclusions have been much questioned in recent scholarship that tends now to see a continuation of Cherson as a strong trading centre but more focussed on regional Crimean and steppe activity, through a widespread barter system, rather than across the Black Sea.[743] The archaeological evidence tends to confirm such situation with virtually all of the basilicas continuing to function until the ninth and tenth centuries. Indeed it is now thought that some were constructed as late as the seventh century.[744] The city clearly had facilities adequate to house and provision high level exiles. It is also clear that it was sufficiently powerful locally to proclaim an emperor (Philippikos).[745] It had a powerful and influential class concerned for its vested interests in the face of imperial displeasure.[746] It has been argued that Cherson displayed forceful independent tendencies and this appears to be a reasonable reading of the *DAI*.[747] Localised regional governance was to be found in the empire in the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century. We have seen that this was the situation

[740] *Epistolae*, in Mansi X, 682-853 (letters XVI-XVII). Russian trans. in Sorochan (2005), 1289-1295. The complaints are more likely to reflect his discomfiture at being so far from centres of power.
[741] Yakobson (1964), 10; Smedley (1978), 180.
[742] Smedley (1978), 180.
[743] Vasiliev (1958), vol. 1, 224. For various arguments on the issue; Teal (1959), 118-9 (grain shortage at Cherson); Romančuk (1983), 43 (Cherson dependant on grain imports); Romanchuk (2000), 211 (there was no seventh/eighth-century slump).
[744] Romanchuk (2000), 65-72. The churches that are argued to have been constructed in the late sixth or early seventh century are Uvarov's, the 1932 Basilica, the 1935 Basilica and the tetraconch No. 47.
[745] Theo, 380; Mango & Scott (1997), 528.
[746] Theo, 372; Mango & Scott (1997), 520.
[747] *DAI* 53.

that obtained in Amastris where the bishop seemed to be heavily involved in all manner of secular activities at high administrative level.[748] The concerns expressed in the *DAI* can be understood in the context of the local forces being unable to withstand, without imperial assistance, the new dangers apparent on the north Black Sea coast. Constantine VII emphasises that when the emperor calls upon the Chersonites for service, they willingly obey.[749]

2. Cherson in the ninth and tenth centuries.

In the ninth century Cherson comes to perform roles crucial to the empire's policies. Its importance is clear from the numerous entries relating to it in the *DAI*.[750] It was important to know what peoples could threaten the city, the Rus', Bulgars, Turks, and the Khazars, as well as who were possible trading partners. It was important as well to remember some aspects of recent (since Roman imperial times) history of the city and what might trigger acts of rebellion. One of the largest chapters of the *DAI* is exclusively devoted to these issues and concludes with advice on how the city can be starved into submission.[751] Furthermore the role of Cherson in the reign of Justinian II was not to be forgotten. An extract from Theophanes specifically relating to that time is included.[752]

2.1 Changes in north Black Sea power structures.

[748] VGA 23, 24, 25.
[749] *DAI*, 53. 23.
[750] *DAI*, 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 22, 37, 42, 53.
[751] *DAI*, 53.
[752] *DAI*, 22.

Justinian II fled from Cherson to the sanctuary of the Khazar court.[753] The governance of Cherson was clearly in a state of some ambiguity at this time since Theophanes records that its governor was the Khazar khagan's personal representative.[754] The Khazars controlled a large territory. The *DAI* refers to its "nine regions"[755] that took fifty days to cross in the 930s.[756] That there was an effective *pax Khazaria* over a large swathe of land north of the Black Sea is clear. Permission had to be sought to cross Khazar territory and tithes had to be paid from trading by all peoples both within and coming to their territory.[757] It would seem that Cherson and its regions were within that zone until ca. 838. There is no doubt that Cherson and its surrounding regions owed political allegiance to the empire since they acclaimed Bardanes Philippikos emperor[758] yet true local authority was clearly shared between the empire and Khazaria.

The Khazars are not recorded as being overly threatening to the empire; indeed there seemed to have been a long and mutually beneficial existence. Their attention appeared to focus over the Caucuses, against the Caliphate and into Armenia.[759] This assisted the empire because the Arabs remained their principal threat on this border until well into the ninth century. There did appear, however, to be regional tension between the empire and Khazaria over control of the cities and regions of the south Crimean coast that resulted in localised hostilities that fell short of outright war.[760]

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[753] Theo, 372. Mango & Scott (1997), 520.
[754] Theophanes records that the Khagan's personal representative, called the "*tudun*" was by that office alone, the governor of Cherson. Theo, 378. Mango & Scott (1997), 527 and 530, n. 5.
[755] *DAI* 10/ 5.
[756] The Schechter Text, p. 121, *22*.
[757] Ibn Fadlan, 61, 74.
[758] Theo, 379. Mango & Scott (1997), 528
[759] Theo, 316 and 407. Mango & Scott (1997), 447 and 563.
[760] An example of this is the Khazar raid on a Byzantine settlement St. Cyril witnessed on his way to visit the Khagan. VC, ch. 8.

By the ninth century, although the Khazars were, by all accounts, still being useful to the empire by protecting the regions north of the Black Sea and providing some buffer between the empire and movements on the steppe,[761] there were worrying developments which prompted the empire to become proactive in the region. In the 830s a request was received in Constantinople from the Khazars to build for them a fortress in Sarkel.[762] It must have seemed surprising to the empire because of the size and strength of the Khazarian state. The Khazars also had their own building tradition in brick, stone and wood all of which is well attested in Arab sources of the period.[763]

The request must certainly have been seen in the capital as urgent and in the clear interests of security since a high imperial official was dispatched immediately across the Black Sea taking with him part of the Black Sea fleet. Shortly afterwards a report from this official, Petronas, about conditions in the region were so worrying that the emperor was prompted to create a new theme for the regions (the Klimata)[764] and

[761] There is no evidence of any formality by treaty or otherwise between the empire and Khazaria. In the *DAI* the emphasis seems to be on who can be called upon, from time to time, to provide some checks and balances on Khazar aggression on the occasions it threatens Byzantine interests e.g. via the Uzes, the Pechenegs and the Alans. *DAI* 9, 114; 10, 3-4. Noonan has characterised the relationship between Khazaria and the empire as one of neighbours with different interests but who "maintained a low level dispute over the eastern Crimea". Noonan (1992), 132.

[762] *DAI*, 42**.**

[763] Ibn Fadlan, 73. The khagan's palace is built of brick, the only one permitted to be so built. There are structures also built of clay. In the capital, Itil, there are thirty mosques. It is likely they were also built as permanent structures, of clay or brick. That the Khazars had this capability is one of the reasons Whittow has suggested the whole event may have been a "cover story" for a Byzantine military adventure that went wrong. Whittow (1996), 233-234.

[764] The date for the formation of the theme has been debated. The range is between 839 and 841.The name means "the regions" or "the districts". Cherson was, prior to this, often coupled by Theophanes with its immediate environs and neighbouring cities on the southern Black Sea coast (e.g. Theo, 377-380; Mango & Scott (1997), 527-9 and Theo, 451; Mango & Scott (1997), 621). "The regions" were probably cities governed by an *archon*. Zuckerman (1997), 217-220. Cherson is specifically referred to a Byzantine naval base in sources reflecting the position prior to the Macedonian period. Ahrweiler has argued that the *archon* may well have been responsible for the fleet and coastal and North Black Sea defence and not a municipal territorial jurisdiction. Ahrweiler (1966), 72 and 90.

appoint the same Petronas its *strategos*. The DAI reports the expedition of Petronas involving the Paphlagonian theme fleet and disembarking at Cherson.[765]

One may deduce that this action terminated the Khazar authority which had hitherto been wielded over the Crimean peninsula.[766] There is no mention in any of the sources that the Khazars sought to oppose this step. What was taking place to seemingly weaken Khazarian authority and cause the empire to strengthen its northern defences?

In 837 a group of people, the Magyars ("Turks" to the Byzantines), are found at the mouth of the Danube and came to the attention of the empire for the first time.[767] They had been pushed west from their former homes in Khazaria by another aggressive tribal group, the Petchenegs. Constantine VII tells us that the Petchenegs themselves came from the north Caspian region.[768]

A mosaic of population movements was changing the complexion of the north Black Sea region which the empire had started to watch carefully. The pages of the *DAI* graphically recount the aggressive interplay between the Rus', Magyars, Black Bulgarians, Khazars, Alans, and Uzes.[769] All these were equally in awe of the

[765] There is no description in the *DAI* of the route taken but the involvement of the theme of Paphlagonia, is suggestive that it went via Amastris, joined the theme fleet there, and then, utilising a weak cross sea current (Black Sea Pilot, 31-2 and facing chart), made direct for Crimea. In a recent study Dimitroukas seemed to dismiss such a notion, suggesting the expedition followed either a direct route from Constantinople, or, indeed progressing eastwards, stopped instead at Sinope. Dimitroukas (1997), 437. The first alternative seems unlikely since it would have necessitated a large fleet, carrying a sizeable passenger (non-naval, civilian) manifest and cargo risking a lengthy open sea voyage. The second appears to dimiss the explicit Paphlagonian connextion. The theme of Paphlagonia had been established at least 13 years.
[766] Zuckerman (1997), 221-222.
[767] Wozniak (1975), 59.
[768] *DAI* 37/1-10.
[769] The fist chapters of the *DAI*, from 1 to 13, concentrate on the interplay between the empire and these peoples and their relationships with each other

Petchenegs around whom the intricacies of Black Sea diplomacy of the late ninth and early tenth centuries appear to revolve.

Of singular interest, however, were the activities of the Rus'. The impact this group had in the Black Sea throughout our period and on Amastris and Mesembria has been already addressed.[770] Cherson was close to their points of entry into the Black Sea. As well as the documented Dnieper route, Khazarian sources also reveal that Rus' were established on the Volga around 912 and were likewise aggressive plunderers as well as traders.[771] It is reported that the Khazars released their Muslim mercenaries on one occasion so that they could seek revenge after a particularly bloody attack on the shores of the Caspian. Evidently the Rus' attacks were indiscriminate since the report clearly states that the Muslim forces were joined by Christians living in Khazaria.[772]

The Rus' differed markedly from the other groupings north of the Black Sea. For the ninth century and the first part of the tenth, the Rus' were disparate bands. Some groups sought cordial relations and others did not or perhaps the same groups altered their aims at whim. There were, thus, for the empire twin concerns of violent unpredictability and naval expertise that together threatened Byzantine interests across the Black Sea as no other "barbarian" had. An attempt at predicting their moves is at the heart of the section in the *DAI* dealing with their annual trek down the Dnieper with their "monoxyla".[773]

[770] See pp. 64-5 and 85-7; 176-8 .
[771] Golb and Pritsak (1982), 51-52.
[772] Ibid.
[773] *DAI* 9

By the end of the ninth century there had been a degree of coalescence of many of the Rus' bands although those on the Volga remained distinct into the tenth century. The reference in the Primary Chronicle to the land of Rus' being first named is an indicator of a sense of greater "national identity".[774] By the start of the tenth century the Kievan group had precedence, so far so that Byzantium felt able to try and control their behaviour through formal treaty obligations in ca. 907.[775] Throughout the first half of the tenth century, in 912 and 945, the provisions had to be continually re-affirmed.[776]

Control of behaviour was through a twin approach of the granting of allowances to genuine traders, and the recording of names plus the requirement to carry certificates confirming the numbers of ships and peaceful intention.[777] The Rus' were specifically enjoined not to harass Cherson and its regions.[778]

2.2 Cherson as strategic centre.

2.2.1. Early warning role

The use of the city as part of an early warning system for the empire is revealed in the Primary Chronicle. In tandem with other settlements along the western Black Sea

[774] PC, 6360 (852).
[775] PC, 6412-6415 (904-907). The monthly allowance is to be given first to those from Kiev.
[776] The treaty of 912 refers to terms "as previously agreed", and that of 945 to renewing previous treaties. PC 6420 (912) & 6453 (945).
[777] PC, 6412-6415 (904-907) & 6453 (945).
[778] PC, 6453 (945).

coast it provided advance information of the massing of Rus' forces and their descent to the capital.[779]

2.2.2. Protection of naphtha wells.

The protection of the Greek Fire technology was seen as vital to the naval superiority of the Byzantine navy and the empire's security in the light of the Rus' threat from the sea. Constantine VII sets out admonishments and injunctions backed up by curses against the revealing of the secrets.[780]

As well as the technology itself, it was also vital to protect the wells of naphtha that provided the empire with the material for its secret weapon. Those wells were to be found extensively in the vicinity of Tmutorakan by the Sea of Azov.[781] It is surely no coincidence that such information is contained in that part of Constantine's imperial advice dealing with Cherson and just prior to the section concerning the tactics for dealing with any rebellion on the part of the city.[782] Cherson was peculiarly well placed to safeguard the wells and the removal of the material.

2.2.3. Garrison and naval base.

A seal of the ninth century of the *strategos* of Sicily has been found in Cherson.[783] This would suggest movement of troops from other parts of the empire to bolster the garrison at Cherson. This would fit comfortably with the urgency demonstrated by the

[779] PC, 6452 (944).
[780] *DAI*, 13/73-103.
[781] *DAI* 53/493-511.
[782] *DAI* 53/510-535.
[783] Sokolova (1993), 107.

emperor in creating the new theme of the Klimata and points to a perceived need to create a show of imperial strength on the north Black Sea.

Creation of a theme would entail the formation of a permanent garrison of troops enhanced from time to time by the raising of the local militia. The complement probably varied from theme to theme but perhaps numbered around 2,000 men.[784] In Cherson's case the number may initially have been more substantial. Like Paphlagonia on the opposite shore Cherson is also likely to have had a permanent theme fleet as well as regular visits by the imperial ships of war carrying the agents of the empire to negotiate terms with the Pechenegs, itself a necessary part of the empire's defence strategy.[785]

2.3. Trading centre.

The dependence on trade for the city's survival is explicitly stated in the *DAI*.[786] Grain, wine and other necessaries come from Anatolia.[787] It would seem that the trade with Khazaria and other regions on the north Black Sea lands that Cherson had been part of in the seventh and eighth centuries had severely contracted, presumably because of the disruptive activities of the Magyars, Uzes and others.[788] Cherson was not only dependant on shipments of foodstuffs from the empire but also was in need

[784] Treadgold (1989), 134; Haldon (1999), 124.
[785] *DAI*, 7 & 8. The large capacity of the port facilities at Cherson is illustrated by its ability to cope without apparent difficulty with the hosting there of the imperial fleet of Petronas, the Paphlagonian fleet, Cherson's own theme fleet and the merchant shipping both habitually moored there as well as those accompanying Petronas carrying civilians and material for the Sarkel expedition.
[786] *DAI* 53/530-535.
[787] *DAI*, 53/520-525.
[788] Trade with the Pechenegs was a vital component to its survival but only for the purpose of obtaining tradeable goods such as hides and wax. The markets of the empire needed to be open to the city. *DAI*, 53/ 530-532. There must surely have been a continuing trade with Khazaria whose principal revenue was from trade well into the tenth century; Ibn Fadlan, 74.

of an annual subsidy and tribute amounting to twelve pounds of gold.[789] Cherson, however, had an extensive merchant fleet to supply both the city and take commercial advantage of trading opportunities; the fleet's ships were, at any one time, to be found in all the Black Sea ports as well as Constantinople.[790]

Cherson became, in the ninth century, an important link in the empire's trading network and a great source of income from tariffs. The city was in a perfect position to intercept and regulate traffic across the north Black Sea coast with shipping unlikely to risk direct crossings because of the unpredictable nature of conditions.

Regulation of the traffic and collection of revenue from it was in the hands of imperial officials, the *kommerkiarioi*. A great number of seals (ca. 260) of this official have been found at, or relate to, Cherson.[791] It was not the only customs post on the south Crimean coast. Seals of *kommerkiarioi* of the ninth and tenth centuries have also been found at Sugdaia (modern Sudak)[792] indicating the high volume of trading activity taking place around the north Black Sea.The importance, locally, of the *kommerkiarioi*, in this period is revealed by the dignities held by the office holder. By the tenth century some held the rank of *spatharokandidatos* also held by Cherson *strategoi*.[793] This seeming raising of status was not limited to Cherson. A

[789] *DAI*, 53/ 526-529.
[790] *DAI*, 53/ 512-521.
[791] Šandrovskaja (1993), 96-98. Sokolova (1993), 99.
[792] Ibid, 86-97.
[793] DOS 1, 184-186. SBS 4, 145-6. Both ranks were entitled thereby to receive seven pounds of gold nomismata at annual distributions at the Feast of Palms as witnessed by Liudprand. Whittow (1996), 110. The *spatharokandidatos* was the third-highest honorary title granted outside the imperial family. Treadgold (1988), 463.

kommerkiarios at Debeltos of the ninth or tenth century also had the rank of *spatharokandidatos*.[794]

The high status of the city and its position in the trading web is also evidenced by the revival of its own mint during the reign of Theophilos.[795] This coinage bore distinctive markings unlike that issued at the Constantinopolitan mint. It commonly bore the initial of the emperor's name or monogram, the reverse carrying a religious symbol (a cross alone or on a stepped base). Some of the earliest, however, are exceptional. They have been dated to the reign of Michael III. There appeared to have been two types of coinage issued at this time in parallel, one set bearing the initial of the emperor and the other a seemingly enigmatic "pi" and "alpha" mark on the obverse. It has been convincingly argued that these were designations of the heads of the local, Chersonite, civil authority at the time of the formation of the theme, the *archon* and the *protueon,* the very persons Petronas advised the emperor not to trust.[796]

The survival of the city was, therefore, of vital concern for the empire. To that end it ensured that treaties with the Rus' contained specific provisions protecting the fisheries at the mouth of the Dnieper.[797] Although the Primary Chronicle only mentions such a provision in relation to the treaty of 945, it, as has already been noted, was recorded as a renewal of previous ones. Cherson was just as important to

[794] DOS 1, 172 (76.2). Recent discussions on the development of the *kommerkiarioi* and their increasing importance with concomitant rise in status can be found in Haldon (1990), 232-238; Dunn (1993).
[795] Zolotarev and Kochetkova (1999), 81. The mint continued to function until the thirteenth century.
[796] Anokhin (1980), 116-118. *DAI* 42/ 45-47.
[797] PC, 6453 (945).

imperial interests in 907 and it was likely to have figured to the same degree in the treaty of that year.

2.4. The polyglot city.

In great part as a result of its status as a significant trading city, Cherson would almost certainly have had permanent settlements of non-Greek speakers and non-Christians from its early days.

It is reported that when Cyril and Methodios went to Cherson en route to the Khazars, they found the gospels written in "Russian letters" there and Cyril achieved expertise in the language.[798] This may be a reference to some long lost script. Cyril, however, was fluent in Slavic and, indeed, the brothers' expertise in the language (being Thessalonians) was one of the reasons for their being originally chosen for their work in Moravia.[799] It is possible Slavic was a *lingua franca* amongst the Rus', perhaps in a dialectic form, and that this is what Cyril mastered. Constantine VII compares Slavic and Rus' names when dealing with the movements of the Rus' in the *DAI*.[800] Whatever the case it seems evident that the Rus' had a less than transient presence in Cherson.

[798] VC, ch. 8.
[799] VM, ch. 6.
[800] *DAI* 9/39-48 and 58-65.

That the Rus' set up permanent settlements is well attested, indeed Kiev itself may have originally been a Khazar stronghold that was taken over by them.[801] It is clear that, by the start of the tenth century there was a permanent presence in Constantinople, obliged by treaty to restrict itself to the St. Mamas district.[802] Ibn Fadlan records a permanent base at Itil where Rus' had built large wooden houses.[803] A provision in the 945 treaty expressly forbade the Rus' from creating settlements (or persisting in them) at the mouth of the Dnieper and other places at or near the Black Sea. The treaty also sought to limit the permanence of the St. Mamas ghetto by stipulating no over-wintering, probably with limited success since such a proviso had not featured in the 904-7 treaty. It seems that the size of the local population of Rus' had grown to such numbers that controls on fresh numbers attempting to settle were felt necessary.[804] The presence of a permanent and growing settlement at Cherson is probably reflected in the provision of the 945 treaty that the Rus' must not seek to exercise authority over the city.

The Life of Constantine also suggests that Cherson had a sizeable, settled Jewish quarter. Cyril is recorded as learning Hebrew there in preparation for his journey to the Khazar capital.[805] This suggests that not merely was there a Jewish presence (which would have been the case in any sizeable city at the time) but there were also tutors teaching the Hebrew tongue. Khazarian sources reveal that, when the Khazars

[801] Golb and Pritsak (1982), 55. Franklin and Shepard (1996), 94-95.
[802] PC, 6412-6415 (904-907).
[803] Ibn Fadlan, 64.
[804] PC, 6453 (945).
[805] VC, ch. 8.

converted to Judaism, large numbers of Jews flocked there from Cherson as well as other parts of the empire and Baghdad.[806]

The Khazars themselves, relying principally on trade,[807] would have likely maintained semi-permanent posts outside the territory of Khazaria proper, Cherson being one likely such place particularly during the time they had effective control of the region when they would have readily extracted tolls and tithes from Crimean and Black Sea trade. There is indeed some evidence of permanent settlement. A spindle whorl dated to the ninth century and identified as Khazarian on the basis of geometric patterns impressed on its surface has been uncovered in Cherson.[808] Such non-elite domestic items suggest the presence of whole family groups and therefore less than transient occupation. There is no record of any expulsion of Khazars from the city after their authority was terminated in 838 and they may have remained a presence there and become absorbed in the general ethnic mix.

2.5. Centre for imperial evangelism.

An integral part of Byzantine diplomacy at this time was to "tame" the foreign forces facing it by conversion to Orthodoxy which carried with it the implicit acceptance of the supremacy of the emperor in temporal affairs.[809] Cherson, as the sizeable

[806] The Schechter Text, 111.
[807] Ibn Fadlan, 74.
[808] NPTC catalog no. 192/36506 (excavations of O. I. Dombrovsky, 1955, unpublished).
[809] The close involvement of the emperor in conversion activity is well attested in the sources. Basil I persuaded Boris to allow a network of bishoprics to be built across the country and sent prelates and monks drafted in from other parts of the empire to inculcate the wider population. Theo. Cont. V. 96, p. 342. That conversion of a populace as a whole was an imperial tactic is shown by the comment in the *Taktika* of Leo VI. Leo VI, *Tactica*, xviii, *PG*, 107, cols 672-1120. "…Basil…prevailed upon them (the Slavs) to renounce their ancient customs…made Greeks of them and subjected them to governors according to the Roman model…he freed them from bondage to their own rulers." Obolensky (1971), 113. Basil I is reported to have converted the Rus'. Theo. Cont. V. 97, pp. 342-3. The close personal

Orthodox Christian presence on the north Black Sea coast, was well placed to carry out such a role.[810]

It is quite possibly not a coincidence that Cyril and Methodios were dispatched, via Cherson, to Khazaria so soon after the devastating Rus' attack on Constantinople in 860.[811] This mission was ostensibly to convert the Khazars and, if successful, would have created an even stronger bulwark against the Rus'. The Life of Constantine does reveal the Khazars being, partially at least, receptive to the advances of Byzantine evangelism, albeit a year later Judaism was chosen in preference.[812] The empire did not give up on Khazaria. In 919/920 Nicholas I Mystikos communicated with the archbishop of Cherson and its *strategos* regarding continuing efforts to pursue a mission there, the archbishop himself having been instructed to carry out the work personally. The *strategos* was specifically asked to assist.[813]

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involvement of Constantine VII in the conversion of Princess Olga is attested in both the Primary Chronicle and *De ceremoniis*. PC, 6456-6463, (948-955); *De Ceremoniis*, pp. 597, 598. Franklin and Shepard (1996), 135-6.

[810] Walter (1978), 249. Noonan considers that conversion activity was not an option for the northern Black Sea: Noonan (1992), 121. He notes there was no attempt to convert the Pechenegs or the Magyars and attempts with the Khazars were uncuccessful.

[811] For the Rus' attack see Photios, *Homolies*, Hom. III and IV; trans. Mango (1958), 82-110. For the mission of Cyril and Methodios see VC, ch. 8.

[812] VC, ch. 8 (conversion of Khazar commander); VC, ch. 9 (Khagan's court does obeisance to Cyril); VC, ch. 11 (200 baptised and the khagan is convinced of the true faith).

[813] NCP, *Letters*, 68 and 106. The Khazars are reported to have been requesting presbyters be sent to them. Recently it has been argued that the people being referred to in *Letter* 68 were not of the Khazar Khaganate but of a group, Khozirs, in the east of the Crimean peninsula. These are identified as of general Khazar racial stock but Christians of the archbishopric of Phoulai newly created in ca 920. Zuckerman (2006), 201-230. The argument is persuasive and it is certainly unlikely the archbishop would have travelled far from Cherson in the time allowed for what is clearly to be read as a brief detour before taking up his throne. The argument that the detour could not have been into Khazaria proper because that would have resulted in martyrdom is, however, questionable. Certainly, at the time, Khazaria was a vigorous state, and at times aggressively so, protecting its trading interests. All sources, however, consistently portray it as comprising a multi-faith society with only an elite governing class staunchly Jewish. Furthermore the different faith elements had considerable freedom of worship, including the erection of structures relevant to their respective faiths. The mission of Constantine and Methodios had partial success. It is perfectly possible, and indeed unsurprising for the time, that there would continue to be concern on the part of the church to maintain any such footholds. Furthermore it is highly unlikely the Khazar Khagan would have sanctioned the martyrdom of a senior Byzantine churchman and upset its stable and mutually beneficial relationship with the empire.

There is also some suggestion implicit in the Life of Cyril that he and Methodios were involved in proselytizing amongst the Rus' in Cherson or, at the very least, seeking to gauge the scale of the problem facing an evangelical mission.[814] It is recorded that it was not long after the 860 attack that Rus' legates were baptised in Constantinople.[815]

The central role of Cherson in conversion activity is also perhaps revealed in its being raised to the status of an archbishopric directly subject to the imperial see early in the tenth century.[816] Cherson is listed nineteenth in the order of precedence and it is joined in the list by archbishoprics of Bosporus (37), Gothia (44) and Sougdaia (45), all ranged across the southern Crimean coast.[817]

That pivotal position of Cherson in this effort is revealed clearly in the part it played in the conversion of Vladimir in 989. The Primary Chronicle reports the conversion specifically taking place in the city and possibly the marriage to Anna as well.[818] It was specifically Chersonite clergy whom Vladimir took with him to Kiev to be the instruments of conversion of the populace and the establishment of an ecclesiastical

[814] St. Cyril discovered gospels in Russian letters and acquired the language. VC, ch. 8.
[815] Theo. Cont. IV. 33, p. 196. In 874 the chronicle further records the Rus' accepting an archbishop sent by Ignatios. Theo. Cont. V. 97, pp. 242-3.
[816] Darrouzès I, *Not*. 7 (273).
[817] Ibid.
[818] PC, 6496 (988). It is to be noted that only Constantinopolitan clergy would suffice for the marriage ceremony yet it was specifically Chersonite clergy who Vladimir insisted on to be the instruments of establishing Orthodoxy in Rus'. The insistence on priests from the imperial capital (probably of H. Sophia) for the wedding is quite explicable. This was not just an issue of temporal but also ecclesiastical dominance, within Kievan Rus'. Nothing less than the blessing by imperial clergy would do. Vladimir was establishing himself as the second Constantine- as the PC explicitly confirms (PC, 6523 (1015)). It is also likely Anna herself, as a *porphyrogennita*, would have insisted on imperial clergy in any event. Suggesting that would not have been appropriate for the chronicle which reveals Vladimir as insistent and the emperor as compliant. There would also be an issue of the relative positions, in gender terms, of Vladimir and his consort. Her actions in enabling Vladimir in becoming healed (through baptism) of his blindness are quite gender stereotypical. Nevertheless Anna is revealed, in the PC, as a strong willed person. She may have been singularly instrumental in palace design in Kiev and the dedication of the palatine tithe church to the Virgin. Kämpfer (1993), 101-110. Poppe (1981), 25.

hierarchy.[819] The explicit reference to Cherson is a clear signifier of the particular status (perhaps even affection) that the city held for the Rus'. One can certainly argue that the choice of that city's clergy was made quite deliberately because they were skilled in the business of conversion, could converse in the Rus' tongue[820] and were known through previous work to many of the trading nation. Indeed, Chersonite clergy may have already been established in Kiev by the time of conversion. Rus' sources report monasteries already established in Kiev by the time of Vladimir.[821]

3. Ninth- and tenth-century monuments of Cherson.

None of the buildings in Cherson survives as a complete structure. What remain are typically the foundation and some two or three courses of superstructure. This creates problems in dating. Only on one structure from the middle Byzantine period, No. 25 (referred to in reports also as "the church above the pickled fish tanks"),[822] was an inscription[823] found that provided a firm date. Otherwise the dating evidence has been, stylistically, on the basis of comparison with foundation plans and masonry styles together with such dateable material as pottery, coins and stratigraphy (where foundations were not, as they were in a great many cases, laid directly on to bedrock).

[819] PC, 6496 (988), 6497 (989).
[820] As previously noted fluency in the language of the "target" nation was specifically relevant in the choice of Cyril and Methodios for their work. This aspect may in part explain the singular role of the clergyman Anastasius set out in the Primary Chronicle. He is credited with betraying the city to Vladimir's besieging army, and thereafter he is "rewarded" by the entrusting to him of the Tithe Church and its income; PC, 6496-7 (988-9), 6502-4 (994-6). It is unlikely he would have been chosen for the latter role had he not been conversant with the host language. One can understand the "betrayal" (an action which is hardly likely to be viewed in Rus' as, by itself, praiseworthy) as a form of revelation by God of Vladimir's status (he had already undertaken to God to be baptised were he to be successful; PC, 111). He might actually, of course, have been Rus'. Vernadsky (1941), 300.
[821] Monasticism took hold strongly and rapidly in Kievan Rus'. Shortly after 1015, monks from Kievan monasteries are travelling to Mount Athos, including the founder of the Caves Monastery in Kiev, Antonij. Hollingsworth (1992), 54, n.139.
[822] Romanchuk (2000), 231.
[823] The inscription on this structure dates it to 1183. Ibid, 232.

In a number of cases the dating is dependant on the results of very early investigations, many of which have been described as deficient by modern scholars.[824]

The Cherson churches have not been systematically studied as a whole. The site is so large that barely a third of the area enclosed within the walls has been uncovered since the nineteenth century. Excavations have concentrated on specific zones such as the supposed ecclesiastical heart, the central square and the large imposing basilicas. Modern projects such as the one by teams from Austin, Texas in the southern region and a Ukrainian project centred on the citadel continue the pattern and the recording of material and the mapping of data is now much more meticulous.[825] Not only is there much that has yet to be uncovered but also the visible face of the site reflects the city's late Byzantine character and the changes wrought in that period mask much of the middle Byzantine period with which this study is concerned.

That said, there is now a sufficiently large corpus of material from which it is possible to construct a reasonably confident relative dating consistent with what the literary sources say about the city in the middle period.

3.1. Phases of building.

[824] Romanchuk (2000), 63.
[825] The Austin, Texas University team at Cherson was made up of a wide range of specialisms, GIS specialists, architects, metallurgists, ceramic experts, botanists, physical anthropologists and conservation experts. As to condition recording of the site see Cleere, Trelogan and Eve, *Condition Recording for the Conservation and Management of Large, Open-Air Sites: a pilot project at Chersonesos (Crimea, Ukraine)*; (awaiting publication). The report details the steps taken to adequately deal with a muli-phase site and to meet the challenge of managing, accessing and visualising the data collected, and subsequently conserving the site. I was privileged to have been a member of the team as its special finds registrar from 2005-8.

Scholars have consistently identified building in the city as occurring in phases, each with characteristic structures starting with the sixth and seventh century and the large basilicas, followed by, in a later period, three apsed and centrally focussed structures and finally the last centuries characterised by the plethora of small single apsed chapels dotted about all the quarters of the city.[826]

Within these broad classes differences have been noted and further sub-divisioning has been mooted. It is at that level that scholarly agreement has become diffused. As the example of the 1935 Basilica indicates[827] apse shape altered from polygonal to semi-circular at some stage in the early period suggesting a separate period of rebuilding. There is also a mixture of masonry forms, from carefully squared blockwork to *opus mixtum* to mixed, irregular stonework, all which would seem to have occurred together in the sixth century building phase depending on the dating of certain seemingly related structures, the cross-formed churches, of which Cherson boasted a number both within and outside the city walls.[828]

3.2 Identifying middle Byzantine structures.

There can be little doubt that the earliest church structures in Cherson are characterised by masonry of carefully squared blocks and polygonal (mainly three sided) apses.[829] Such features are shared by the large three aisled basilicas. It has been convincingly argued, as already noted, that many of these continued in use into the

[826] Smedley (1978), 174.
[827] See p. 228ff above.
[828] Lositsky (1990), 45.
[829] For a review of the early Christian Churches in Cherson see Pülz (1998).

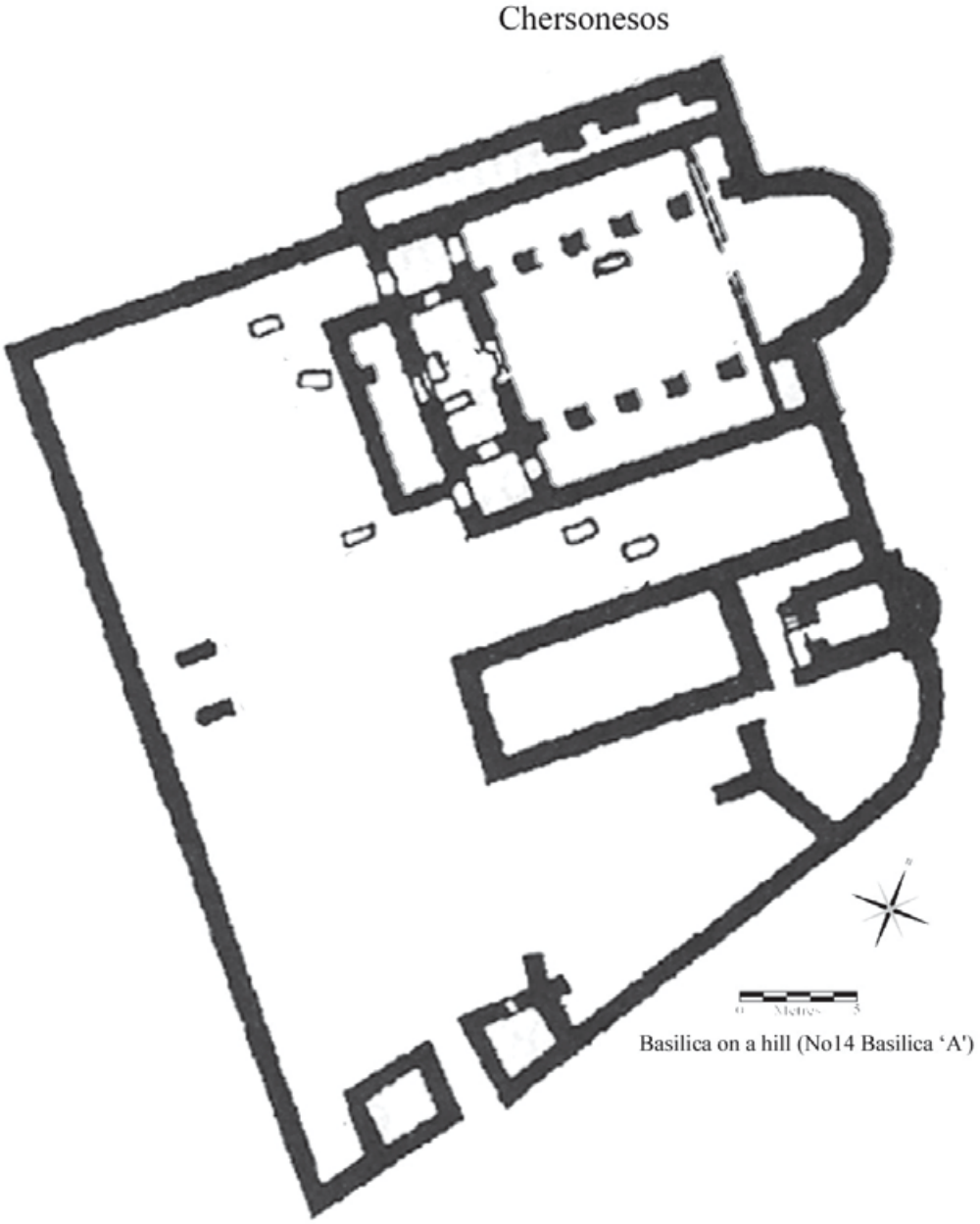
middle period. Carefully squared and laid blockwork does not feature in later building.[830]

Changes in design and masonry form began to appear towards the end of the early period. The alteration of the apse of the 1935 Basilica is telling. Here not only was there a change from a three sided form to semi-circular but there was also a substantial re-aligning (more to the east) of the building that must have involved an almost complete rebuilding. Stratigraphical and coin evidence suggests an end of fifth-century building period of the first church and a late sixth- or early seventh-century one for the rebuilding.[831]

Two other major structures underwent significant reformations. The Uvarov Basilica's polygonal apse is replaced at some stage by a rounded form at the same time as other alterations and additions are made to this, the city's ecclesiastical centre. Coin finds date a second phase build to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.[832] The so-called Basilica on a Hill (No. 14) was originally a "standard" three aisled form with a five sided apse. At a later date this church was dismantled and, as part of a complex of buildings a new and large (20m long) three aisled basilica with a fully semi-circular apse was erected (fig. 67). The first church, on the basis of pottery and ceramics, has been dated to the mid-sixth century. The later church has been dated to a period from the tenth to the end of the eleventh

[830] Lositsky (1990), 45.
[831] Zavadskaya (1996), 94-105 and figures at 507-510. The re-alignment moved the structure more to an easterly orientation and the second church was significantly longer covering a filled in pickled fish tank. Romanchuk (2000), 227. See Zavadskaya (1996), 508, fig. 2, for plans.
[832] Pülz (1998), 49. Stratigraphical dating was not possible here because the structure was erected on to bedrock.

Figure 67.



Cherson. Basilica on a Hill (No. 14). Reproduced from Sorochan, S., V. Zubar, & L. Marchenko. 2001. *Zhiz i Gibel Khersonesa*. Kharkov, p. 641.

century.[833] That dating reveals the problem of basing a chronology purely on style. In Cherson at least, the absence, in a new building, of a tripartite apse does not seemingly necessarily imply a pre-ninth-century construction. Two further structures dated to the ninth and tenth centuries further exemplify the point. The late tenth-century so-called Basilica within the Basilica (No. 15) was conceived as a traditional three aisled basilica with a single rounded apse. The Church in the Citadel of the late ninth/early tenth century was, it seems, also a three aisled form but terminating in a (rounded) triple apse.[834]

The move to the rounded apse signifies a distinct change in preference for that form. It is also associated with a change in masonry form and a cessation of the use of the squared blocks. Whilst the 1935 Basilica was rebuilt re-using the stones of its forerunner, the rounded apse of Uvarov's Basilica was of rough stone and the rebuilt Basilica on the Hill was of mixed stone and brick.[835] The later masonry also was the form of the baptistery built adjacent to Uvarov's Basilica and the wall linking the two structures. Roughly squared stone and heavy applications of mortar became the characteristic masonry form for all other Cherson churches and secular building until its fourteenth century demise.

The three sided apse form of the early Cherson churches was entirely consistent with developments in the wider Byzantine world where it remained the preferred form through the seventh century and into the eighth as witness the Koimesis at Nikaia, H. Sophia, Thessaloniki and St. Nicholas at Myra (Demre)[836] and into the ninth if that is

[833] Romanchuk (2000), 223-24 for a summary of findings, dating and bibliography.
[834] Further details and discussion of these structures follows at pp. 237ff.
[835] Romanchuk (2000), 224.
[836] See plans in Krautheimer (1986), 288-291.

the correct date for the church at Dereağzi.[837] The three sided apse also appeared in the first wave of building in the newly Christianised Bulgaria as witness some of the Pliska churches and others.[838] In the late ninth century the pentagonal apse of the sixth-century so-called Great Basilica in Butrint (Albania) was altered to a semicircular one in addition to other remodelling.[839]

The structures erected in the second phase of building by the Bulgars after the move of the capital to Preslav is, again, a barometer of change. The centrally focused churches then built are almost invariably with rounded apses. That form also adorns the Panaghia at Skripou[840] and the church of H. Achilleos, Prespa[841] and the Round Church in Preslav.[842] As we have seen the rounded apse is also the form that typified the churches in Amastris and Mesembria, was the form on St. Anne in Trebizond[843] and also the bulk of the medieval churches in Kastoria.[844] The notable exception in the last mentioned area was H. Stephanos (with a three sided apse). The Taxiarchs (with a semi-circular apse), has been dated to the end of the ninth or the early tenth century.[845] Those two buildings seem to encapsulate the change that seemed to have occurred across the Byzantine world in respect of apse shape during the course of the latter part of the ninth century.

[837] Plan in ibid, 286, fig. 245.
[838] Ćurčić (2010), 284-5 and fig. 299. Mijatev (1974), 76-90.
[839] Bowden and Mitchell (2004), 108 and for a plan, p.106, fig.7.2. Ćurčić (2010),309-10 who noted the similarities of the remodeling between this structure and the Old Metropolis, Mesembria, most particularly the replacement of aisle columns with masonry piers supporting a new clerestoried superstructure.
[840] Plan in Krautheimer (1986), 313, fig. 275.
[841] Mijatev (1974), 92, fig. 90. Even though this structure may have undergone a rebuilding ca. 983, the half round apses are seen by Mijatev as representative of an earlier mid-ninth-century style.
[842] Plan in Krautheimer (1986), 319, fig. 283.
[843] See fig. 3 (c), (d), (g), (h) and fig. 79 (b).
[844] Epstein (1980), 191 figs 1, 3, 4, 5.
[845] Ibid, 195.

The polygonal form does not, however, cease to be preferred in the capital. The rounded apse on the seventh- to ninth-century alterations to the Kalenderhane Camii apart,[846] the three sided form adorns the north church of Constantine Lips and the Myrelaion. Structures built under the influence of the capital such as the Theotokos church at H. Loukas also have that form as do the churches built in Greece in the following centuries. Thus it seems that changes occurring in Cherson mirror changes in design occurring in other areas of the empire in the course of the seventh to the ninth centuries that seem out of step with the capital. What began to be developed in the capital, in terms of apse shape, from the eleventh century, and perhaps as early as the tenth, was a polygonal form, multifaceted but often pentagonal, and one that became, together with the other facades, highly articulated with niches and pilasters.[847] That fashion permeated other areas of the Byzantine world including deep into Asia Minor.[848] Churches with that form also make their appearance in Cherson, evidenced by the structures known as Churches Nos. 6 and 21, but their dating is uncertain, within a range from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.[849]

Those two structures form part of small group of four cross-in-square churches of Cherson within which there is much similarity in form.[850] All are small (the largest, No. 34, is 18m long), terminate in triple apsed bemas and have straightforward four point inner supports of wall piers or columns. Save that two (Nos. 9 and 21) have appended narthexes, there are no added subsidiary chambers. There are, however, distinct differences between Nos. 6 and 21 and the others. They both have pentagonal

[846] See for plan of the various alterations, Krautheimer (1986), 294, fig. 259.
[847] Examples are many and include Eski Imaret Camii (1081-1087), Gül Camii (1100), Zeyrek Camii (South Church) (1118). See, for images, Krautheimer (1986), 361-367.
[848] E.g. Çanlikilise (eleventh century) in the Binbirkilise region; Ramsay and Bell (1909), 404-18.
[849] Romanchuk (2000), 231 and 232.
[850] The four are Church Nos. 6, 9, 21 and 34. The plan of Church No. 9 is shown at fig. 1(e). Plans of the others are to be found in Romanchuk (2000), fig. 33 and fig. 28.

apses (all three apses) whilst the others have simple rounded forms. Furthermore their north, south and west facades are enlivened by recession of planes, on No. 21, doubly so, created by wall pilasters opposite points of support. The two are the product of a building period distinct and separate from the others in the group on which there is no evidence of façade plasticity. On a stylistic comparison, and assuming a Constantinopolitan inspiration, they are likely a product of a period of and after the eleventh century.

Confirmation of such a later date comes from results of a relatively recent examination of the church of St. John the Baptist, Kerch (fig. 79[a]) at the eastern extremity of the southern Crimean coast. The structure occupies a site that has been much re-used since at least the third century. Five different building periods have been identified.[851] Notwithstanding the presence of an inscription on a reused capital within the church, ceramics and stratigraphy point to a date in the period of the ninth to the tenth centuries, confirmed stylistically by its basic cross-in-square plan.[852] As to the elevations of the church, the evidence points to two repair phases, one in the twelfth and another in the fourteenth century, that together result in the form that survived to modern times. These involved an alteration of apse shape from a polygonal to circular shape and the application of surface articulation through a double tier of blind niches.[853] The work associated with those periods is consistent with the creation of the forms of Churches Nos. 6 and 21 in Cherson and a Constantinopolitan influence driving the changes after the eleventh century.

[851] Makarova (1982), 91-106.
[852] Ibid, 100, 103. An earlier report by Yakobson had suggested an eighth-century build (on the basis of the inscripion) and saw it as a significant link in the evolution of the type from Asia Minor to the Bosporan kingdom. Yakobson (1964), 53. That dating is no longer seen as tenable.
[853] Makarova (1982), 102.

The net result of these observations is to conclude that Chersonite churches of the period from the beginning of the eighth century to the close of the tenth or the first half of the eleventh can be characterised by a survival of basilical and cross domed forms, the introduction of the basic cross-in-square, rounded apses, masonry predominantly in roughly squared stone but occasionally in mixed stone and brick and the absence of modelling in facades.

3.3. The issue of external display.

The limited extent of survival of the Cherson churches means it is impossible to assert whether the facades of the churches of the middle period up to the erection of Nos. 6 and 21 bore any decorative elements at all. This does not mean they did not. As the evidence of St. John, Mesembria showed the extent of decorative display through brick designs may have occupied only relatively small areas of the facades and comprise such basic forms that they became lost when the structures were destroyed. Even if large areas of façade were ornamented, as in Kastoria, there would be little evidence of it if the churches there had, as in Cherson, suffered total superstructure destruction.

There is plenty of evidence that brick, the material used in Mesembria and Kastoria to create ornament, was a building material used in Cherson. Its presence is recorded in reports and is visually evident in what now physically remains. Church No. 14 was built, it seems, in *opus mixtum* style in the eleventh century and that form is evident in seventh-century work at the Uvarov Basilica complex, as noted above. During our period, however, it does not appear to have been widely used for construction, indeed

the evidence points to use as sparing as it was in Mesembria, as infill in facades of fieldstone. As in Mesembria brick might have been utilised in creating limited areas of surface ornament. The likelihood of that may be gauged by what was happening in regions with which the city was known to have contact. We have seen that in Amastris at the close of the ninth century concern for external appearance was being clearly expressed and the contacts between the two cities are well documented. Trade across the Black Sea generally would undoubtedly have brought contacts with Mesembria, whose builders were also inserting elements of decoration into facades at the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries. There must be a possibility that, like other design aspects that occurred in Cherson in common with other areas of the empire, decorative patterns found their way there as well.

Support for that proposition comes, once again, from the church of St. John the Baptist, Kerch. Brick heads and brick filled lunettes feature in the apse niches (fig. 68). Of particular interest is the deeply triple recessed niche of the gable end of the north cross vault (fig. 69). The lunette is filled with brick set in a reticulate pattern of repeated "v" forms. A photographic image of the building before its 1960 restoration shows that the south gable end was formed in like manner.[854] Those features almost certainly date back no earlier than the rebuilding period of the twelfth to the fourteenth century mentioned above but they are relevant to the discussion.

They reveal a local tradition of decorative brick embellishment in a form remarkably similar to that displayed at St. John, Mesembria. Furthermore the external appearance generally of the Kerch church bears comparison with that of St. John Aleiturgitos in

[854] I am obliged to Prof. A. A. Bryer for permitting me to view this image in his possession.

Figure 68.

Kerch. St. John. Main apse detail.

Figure 69.

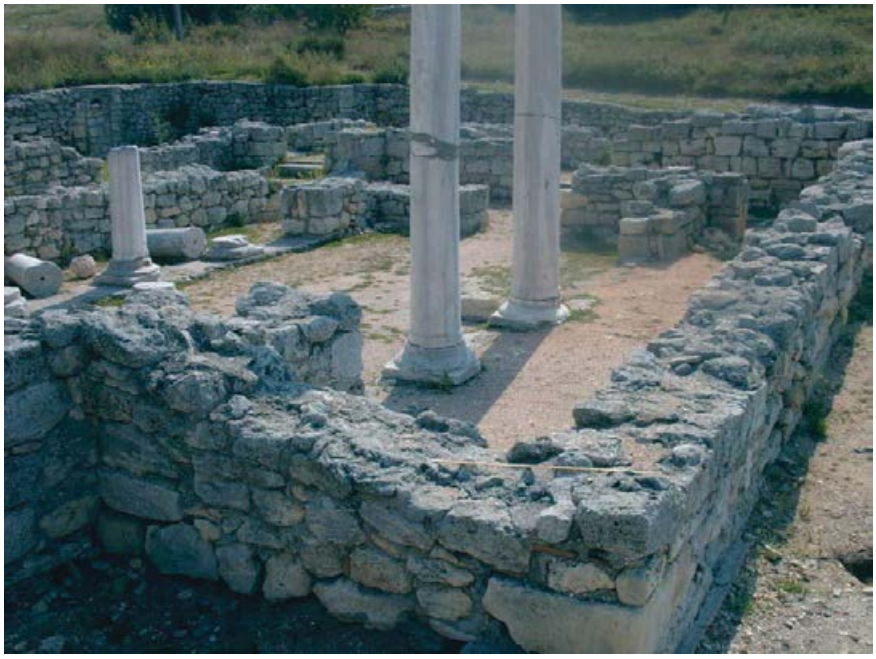
Kerch. St. John. North gable end.

Mesembria, a fourteenth-century structure. Both are strongly articulated with double recessed niches with brick heads and incorporate decorative brick patterning in panels and lunettes. Both make full use of the colourific contrast between the red of brick and white limestone for decorative effect. The point being made here is not that one of these structures directly inspired the other but that, as in Mesembria, the decorative motifs on the later structure can be readily related back to inspiration from an earlier ninth- or tenth-century one, so can the same dynamic be proposed in Kerch and, by extension, the churches of the Byzantine regions of the Crimea.

That said it must be acknowledged that by the time of the rebuilding of St. John, Kerch, external decorative embellishment was being extensively applied to Byzantine churches and its appearance in the Crimea at this time would not be anomalous and need not be evidence of a transmission of motif from an earlier time. That this is an equally likely scenario is supported by the absence of any decorative work on those structures in Cherson that have survived with appreciable amounts of superstructure, the so-called Basilica in the Basilica and the cross formed Church in the Theatre, No. 19. In the former about a meter of wall has survived (figs 70 & 71) and as much as twice that (above foundation layer)[855] in the latter. In neither case, however, has any part of the superstructure above window or door lintel survived. As we have seen with St. John, Mesembria, it was in lunettes, tympana and spandrel areas that embellishment was applied. Even in the Kastorian churches (except for the cloisonné brickwork) decorative elements primarily figured in upper registers and drums. The

[855] The extent of revealed wall now visible is about twice that amount but the floor of the church was level with the third tier of seating in the antique theatre demonstrating the extent to which the theatre area had become buried by the time No. 19 was erected. About half of the wall now visible on the southern side was, therefore, foundation.

Figure 70.



Cherson. Basilica within the Basilica from the north.

Figure 71.

Cherson. Basilica within the Basilica from the southwest.

evidence for the presence of decorative patterns is circumstantial and conclusions either way can only be speculative.

That decorative display was present only in some limited form is confirmed by a chance modest survival in the remnants of the Basilica within the Basilica. On the west side of the narthex near the entrance a cross has been carved into the stone, inscribed within a semi-circle.[856] The presence of that feature links the building with other structures previously considered within our period.

What does seem to be the case, however, is that, until the eleventh century at the earliest, the facades of the Cherson churches were not articulated by pilasters or other surface modelling. In this regard the city did not appear to be following metropolitan practice exemplified by the churches of Costantine Lips and the Myrelaion or, indeed, that of Mesembrian and Balkan building from the late ninth and early tenth century. The unarticulated roughly squared stone masonry (with occasional brick zones) seems most akin with that of Greece for the same period as exemplified by the church of H. Basileos at Methone, dated by Vokotopoulos to the tenth century[857] or that of H. Andreas, Gortyna, of the end of the ninth or the start of the tenth century.[858] It is difficult to postulate any direct communication in style between the Crimea and Greece however.

This is not to say that there is an absence of external display in the Cherson churches of our period. An inspection of the foundation plans suggests there was a concern on

[856] Mack and Carter (2003), 106. No image of this appears in the publication. The author has closely inspected the site and believes he has detected the feature. It is indistinct.
[857] Vokotopoulos (1989), 204.
[858] Ibid, 207.

the part of the builders for display through structure. A more detailed consideration of some of the buildings already mentioned is appropriate.[859]

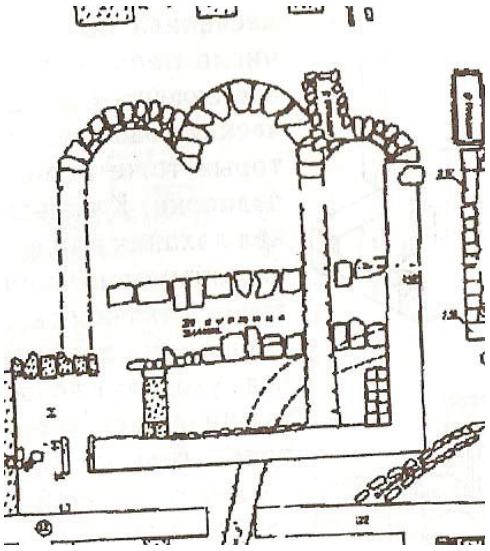
3.3.1. The Church in the Citadel (figs 72 & 73).

This structure is in an area currently the subject of fresh investigations by Ukrainian teams.[860] It has been dated, with some confidence, on the basis of stratigraphical evidence,[861] to between the ninth and eleventh centuries. It adjoins, and appears to be an integral part of, a complex that has been identified as an administrative centre of the city and, as such, possibly the base of the *strategos*.[862]

The structure certainly appears to be associated with the city's expansion from the central square area (and the ecclesiastical centre represented by the Uvarov complex). It lies some four hundred metres from that area, a similar distance from the central square as the Five-Apsed Church and an associated three apsed church linked with expansion south-westward.[863] The building of the citadel complex may therefore be associated with the proximate cause of that expansion, the city's rise in importance in the second half of the ninth century and the creation of a new theme centred on it.

[859] The selection is made from those structures that survive with sufficient currently visible for inspection, and that have been ascribed to the ninth and tenth century with some confidence. An example of a structure that cannot be further considered in this section is the Basilica on the Hill (No. 14), the remains of which are entirely covered in growth.
[860] For a brief description and summary of research to 2000, see Romanchuk (2000), 233. Sorochan (2005), 998-9.
[861] On the stratigraphical evidence see Romanchuk (2000), 233.
[862] Sorochan, Zubar and Marchenko (2001), 534-9, Sorochan (2005), 997-1001.
[863] On which see further below, pp. 250-5. A large section of Hellenistic or Classical period building and street network has been uncovered to the north west of this area that lies well below the foundation level of the citadel complex. The building of a Byzantine period gate above an antique era entrance giving access to the citadel area reveals the extent the ground level had risen.

Figure 72.



Cherson. Church in the Citadel. Plan. Reproduced from Antonova, I. 1997. "Adminstrativnje Zdaniya Khersonesskoi Veksillyatsii i Femui Khersona (po materialam raskopok 1989-1993gg)", *Khersonesskii Sbornik Vuipusk* VIII, Sevastopol, 10-22, p. 20 (fig. 2).

Figure 73.

Cherson. Church in the Citadel.

A number of features are interesting, particularly if the above identification is correct. The form was of a three aisled basilica and was not domed. It had a square nave, 9m long by 8.7m wide and terminated at the east with a triple co-centred apse (fig. 72).[864] The use of the basilical form persists even when possibly associated with a complex freshly created for the new imperial administration (when it might be expected to reflect then current Constantinopolitan forms). Its squat form is reminiscent of the eleventh-century rebuilding of the Basilica on the Hill (No. 14) (fig. 67) also squat in shape (17m long and 16m wide).[865] On a stylistic basis one cannot with confidence connect the citadel building with the founding of the theme in the mid 800s. It could just as well be a product of the tenth century although a comparison with the basilical form of St. Anne, Trebizond is tempting. The latter is also squat in plan with the tripartite apses annexed to a square naos measuring 9m by 9m, a very similar scale (fig. 82[b]). The imperial sponsorship of the rebuilding of St. Anne has already been mentioned.[866] The adoption of a conservative plan is not an indicator of cultural remoteness. Nothing about the foundation plan of the Church in the Citadel suggests anything other than a very conservative structure. There is nothing to point to any structural emphasis. In this aspect the church does not conform to the pattern of others in Cherson associated with the period as will be seen.

The Church in the Citadel was not the only three apsed, basilical form uncovered in Cherson. A basilica in Quarter 7 lying immediately to the northeast of the main square has been recorded. The reports describe a building measuring 14m by 12m with a 2m deep central apse.[867] The nave is described as having been divided from its two aisles

[864] For a detailed plan of the complex see Antonova (1997), 10-22, 20 (fig. 2).
[865] For dimensions see Romanchuk (2000), 224.
[866] See above pp. 99,110-11.
[867] Romanchuk (2000), 228. The writer was not able to locate the structure or trace the reports.

by arcades of four columns. Dating to the ninth to the tenth century was on the basis of ceramic finds beneath the sub-structure. The squatness of the structure is, once again, a notable feature but what differentiates this church from that in the citadel is the much pronounced central apse made more prominent by the width of the central nave (5m) compared to that of the side aisles (2m). The prominence given to the main or single apse is a regularly occurring feature of Cherson's churches for our period as will be seen.

3.3.2. The Basilica within the Basilica (fig. 3[b]).

This structure was built so that it entirely nested within, and replicated the form of, an earlier three aisled basilica (figs 70 & 71). The latter appears to have been contemporary with the large basilicas of the latter part of the early period as evidenced by its size (25m long and 19.5m wide), the semi-circular apse, masonry of relatively large, albeit roughly squared, stones and the use of lime mortar identical to that used in the large basilicas.[868] The first basilica was also adorned with a floor mosaic (also bonded with lime mortar) of a repeating foliate and geometric pattern and featuring a dove in a circle.[869] Coin finds confirm a date no earlier than the mid sixth century for the first basilica.[870]

The outer walls of the later basilica were built upon the stylobates of the aisle colonnades of the earlier. The masonry was of more inferior roughly squared blocks

[868] On the use of lime mortar see Ainalov (1905), 81-92; Ryzhov (1997), 291.
[869] The mosaic has partially survived. For a reconstruction see, Ryzhov, ibid, 292 (fig. 2) and 298 (fig. 5).
[870] Romanchuk (2000), 224.

(fig. 70). It was erected over the mosaic floor of its predecessor.[871] A clay based mortar was used.[872] There is no evidence of any internal decoration and it is thought to have had bare flooring some 1.5m above the floor of the older structure.[873] The absence of any wall thickening suggests that the later basilica, like its forerunner, was timber roofed. Its form was a three aisled basilica with a narthex, the nave and aisles being divided by two triple colonnades. The structure was small, measuring 51.3m in length and 13m wide. Its scale, in that regard, was similar to that of other middle Byzantine churches.[874]

What is so remarkable is the degree to which the later basilica reflects, in ground plan at least, the layout of its larger predecessor.[875] The relationship between nave and side aisles for both is the same, roughly 2.8:1. The builders of the later church appear almost certainly to have designed their church by reference to the earlier one and thereby to have achieved a startling degree of accurate replication.[876] Insofar as the surviving forms of the two churches of Amastris were built upon and repeated the forms of older structures, the Cherson basilica reveals a like urge to closely replicate former structures.

[871] Rhyzhov (1997), 299.
[872] Ainalov (1905), 81-92.
[873] Rhyzhov (1997), 299.
[874] Krautheimer (1986), 343.
[875] Making allowances for small variations of no more than 0.3m to 0.45m, the gap between the two buildings is constant at ca. 3.12m to 3.2m. The only exception to this is between the eastern walls flanking the apses where the gap is about 2.5metres. The gap becomes consistent again, however, if one takes the distance between the points where the east walls meet the curve of the apse.
[876] This nesting, with replication, is, unique. Whilst the construction of a later church within or upon the foundations of an earlier one is a well recognized phenomenon, particularly in the middle period, when an early basilical form was regularly replaced by a smaller centrally focused structure in keeping with patterns of worship and developments in liturgical practice, the distinction of the Cherson church is that it was freshly conceived as an almost slavish copy of the earlier form.

In the Basilica within the Basilica the care in replication starkly reveals the one zone where it did not apply, in the centering of the hemisphere of the apse. For the larger church the diameter line is contiguous with the inner aspect of the eastern wall whereas with the larger church the diameter appears contiguous with the outer aspect of its eastern wall. The later church was deliberately adorned with a more prominent apse.

Dating this structure is problematical. Rhyzhov has confidently asserted a tenth-century date, seemingly on a stylistic basis and assessment of mortar rather than on dateable artifacts.[877] There are aspects of the building that might suggest an earlier, ninth-century dating.

Its close copying of the earlier basilica, including the re-use of the columns, suggests that it was important to the patron that the building be seen as associated with the grand basilicas of the city's early Christian period. Two of those basilicas, the 1932 Basilica and the 1935 Basilica, were close by and undoubtedly highly visible even if in a ruinous state, as the remnants of the 1935 Basilica even now attest. The early period and its huge monumental structures might have seemed, to those in the ninth and tenth century, one in which buildings of wondrous scale were erected.[878] The early period may have been seen as one deserving of particular reverence being associated with the Christianization of the city. A structure built in the ninth century or later and directly associated with that period through the use of material from one

[877] Rhyzhov (1997), 291 and 299.
[878] Ousterhout has proposed that, in terms of architecture, the seventh and eighth centuries saw a move from theory to workshop based practice when the ability to build in a grand scale became lost. As a consequence some of the buildings of the early period (in the case of the *Diegesis*, H. Sophia) would have seemed to have been erected supernaturally, through heavenly inspiration. Ousterhout (2002), 51-6. H. Sophia could only have been built with the aid of angels constantly bringing divine assistance. *Narratio de S. Sophia*, *SOC*, I, 7-29, 12; trans. Mango (1972), 96-102, 98.

of the old basilicas as well as mimicking its form might have been seen as prestigious.[879] Having regard to the care taken in the form and the use of classical elements it is reasonable to assume that the later basilica was built at a time of increased importance and stature of the city and for its elite but before the triple apsed arrangement became "canonical". The time of the creation of the new Black Sea theme with Cherson as its first ranked city is such a period. The arguments used in the discussion of the Amastris churches are apposite here.[880]

The Basilica within the Basilica has been likened to basilical forms erected in Bulgaria in the ninth and tenth centuries.[881] It is difficult to resist a comparison particularly since developments there, as already noted, reveal the preference in design, with the move to Symeon's new capital, from basilical to centrally-focused. Some of the Bulgar basilicas are similar both in ground plan and scale as witness an example such as No. 13 (Pliska).[882] In that structure however, as indeed in the bulk of the basilicas of Bulgaria, the design incorporates thickening of walls at the eastern end to receive vaulting over chambers appropriate for the celebration of the prothesis rite even if, as in No.13, there is no triple apse. The striking feature of the Cherson basilica is that there is no obvious provision made for the rite as it most certainly was fully developed by the time of its erection. No doubt provision would have been made but one can only assume that it would have been by way of non-surviving screening of part of the east end in a manner that must also have occurred in the Amastris churches.

[879] Ousterhout (2002), 56.
[880] See above pp. 74-78.
[881] Rhyzhov (1997), 299.
[882] Mijatev (1974), 82, fig. 76.

There are two ninth-century structures that provide some interesting parallels with the Cherson basilica and which illustrate the extent to which it was seen as important to provide facilities for the liturgy. In both a ninth-century rebuilding took place within, and utilizing the structure of, an earlier age basilica. At the site of the Kalenderhane Camii (St. Mary Kyriotissa), Constantinople, between the sixth and ninth centuries, a timber roofed basilica with a single rounded apse was built, deliberately to fit within the foundation structure of an earlier church and using existing structures even to the extent of permitting distortions in the ground plan (the builders taking steps to skillfully mask them). The building of a diaconicon and insertion of pastophoria partitions show that the new building was, in part at least, erected to accommodate changes in liturgical practice.[883]

The second instance is the lower city church in Amorion where a ninth- or early tenth-century domed basilica was built entirely within, and incorporated part of, an earlier aisled basilical structure. The later church incorporated exterior wall foundations and the (three sided) apse of the earlier one and support piers were sited upon the stylobates of its predecessor. Eastern side chambers without apses were built at this time. They communicated fully with the bema and aisles and were consistent, therefore, with the performance of the prothesis rite.[884]

The necessity for the Amorion church seems to have arisen through the destructive assaults of the Arabs in 838 and perhaps accompanied the reconstruction of the city

[883] Striker and Kuban (1997), 45-84.
[884] Lightfoot, Ivison *et al* (1995), 105-120. Lightfoot, Ivison *et al* (1996), 91-97 and for a plan, fig. 1, 93. Lightfoot, Ivison *et al* (1995), 119-120.

on a smaller, more easily defended scale.[885] The scale of the city reconstruction points to an imperially sponsored operation.[886] The church was clearly of great importance not only because of its size but also because its builders retained and re-used much from the earlier church including the synthronon and, most unusual for a middle Byzantine structure, a solea proceeding to the sanctuary.[887] The preservation of such an almost anachronistic feature would tend to suggest it was a ninth- rather than tenth-century building and it would seem reasonable to see it as part of the programme of constructions and renewals of Michael III and continued by Basil I.[888] Furthermore, in terms of size and design it is tempting to compare this structure to the Dereağzi church dateable to the same period.

Both structures are associated with metropolitan building, the Amorion Lower Church through direct imperial sponsorship. In both, the design has incorporated the necessary details for the performance of the liturgy that are absent from the Basilica within the Basilica. The absence of those features seems to recall, if anything, the Amastris churches, the more so if the pronounced rounded apse is also taken into account.

In the light of the foregoing discussion the Church in the Citadel and the Basilica within the Basilica are possibly contemporaneous (or very nearly so) structures. They are both conceived as three-aisled basilicas and are erected at a time of enhanced status for the city and of close imperial interest. Krautheimer has said that the traditional basilica (with galleries) "had been outmoded for nearly five hundred years"

[885] Ivison (2000), 15. As Ivison notes the contraction of the city to a more readily defendable redoubt is reminiscent of a similar process at Amastris. Ibid, 36, n. 98.
[886] Ibid, 16.
[887] Lightfoot, Ivison *et al* (1995), 118.
[888] Ivison (2000), 27.

in the capital and imperial heartland.[889] Indeed, taking a long view of the development of Byzantine architecture, the form, by the start of the tenth century, is clearly anachronistic save for small chapels and provincial survivals. Yet the pattern of survival is by no means clear even into the tenth century. We have seen with the examples in Amastris, Mesembria and Trebizond that basilical forms continued to be preferred late into the period even when those cities were receiving imperially sponsored renovations. Even the requirements of the liturgy did not necessarily dictate the creation of foundation forms to suit.

The differences between the two are, however, telling. In the citadel church the foundation plan provides properly for the liturgy with its standard triple apsed form. It is otherwise unremarkable and unemphatic. The church appears to have been built quite simply to a utilitarian pattern.

It cannot be said about the Basilica within the Basilica that is standard and utilitarian. Its emphatic single apse and "antique" form would have been highly visible features. Its possible referral back to an earlier glory period requires some explanation. As the *DAI* makes patent Cherson had some reputation for independence of action no doubt borne from being a somewhat distant outpost and one left to its own devices in terms of governance.[890] The governing body had taken on an established form by the ninth century differing from that elsewhere in the empire not least because of the formal involvement of the Khazar rulers. Executive power rested with a person known as the στεφανηφοροῦντος καὶ πρωτεύοντος (chief magistrate and primate) and had been so

[889] Krautheimer (1986), 335.
[890] *DAI* 53/ 111-117 (Chersonites seeking pledges of freedom and immunity from tribute in the sixth century); /512 (steps to be taken if the city revolts or acts contrary to imperial mandate, independent action seen a risk). See pp. 209-10 above.

seemingly since the days of Diocletian.[891] The primate was supported by a council of certain πατέρες τῆς πόλεως (fathers of the city). Some power and authority also subsisted in the city's *archontes* (nobility).[892] Evidence from seals suggests that, notwithstanding the advice of Petronas to Theophilos and the creation of the theme of the Klimata in ca. 839, governance of the city remained with those persons until ca 866/7.[893] The prestige attached locally to that title is revealed by some tenth-century seals of an imperial *protospatharios* with the rank of *proteon*, now equivalent in hierarchical terms with the *strategos*.[894] Even after the change to direct rule the power and influence, let alone the wealth, of the local elite would not have evaporated. Indeed, as the city's status and accompanying trade grew, it is reasonable to assume that the local wealthy prospered. Such persons may have patronised building reflecting local patterns who might reflect upon the city's past prestige. The Basilica within the Basilica could be such a building. Building in local forms is to be observed at Amastris where local administration, as the *VGA* reveals, also seemed habitual, in that case both with the church and local elites,[895] until central authority was imposed in the first quarter of the ninth century. The local forms persisted notwithstanding that change.

Whilst the retention of local types is a characteristic applying independently of contacts with other areas it is appropriate to recall the evidence of communication between Amastris and Cherson that could suggest some degree of cultural interplay

[891] *DAI* 53/ 2.
[892] *DAI* 42/ 46 & 44. As Ahrweiler has emphasised these nobles, although called *archons*, are to be distinguished from a Byzantine imperial official having command of the wing of the imperial fleet. Ahrweiler (1966), 72.
[893] DOS 1, 183 and 186; on the seals of Eustathios (82.1) (8th/9th cent.) and Gregoras (82.2) (early/mid 9th cent.) both are described as archons. On a tenth century seal one Michael is described as a *proteon*.
[894] SBS 7, 79-86 (seals of John).
[895] See above pp. 116-7.

including architecturally. The advice given by Constantine VII in the *DAI* to send one of three imperial agents appointed for the task to the coast of Paphlagonia (i.e. Amastris) to impound Chersonite ships and cargoes and prevent the export to Cherson of necessaries shows the degree of commercial dependence.[896] The discovery at Cherson of a late ninth-century seal with the inscription *Niketa Basiliko spathario kai diokete Amastridos* attests to the regularity of shipping foodstuffs from Amastris.[897] A seal of the Metropolitan of Amastris (albeit of the thirteenth century) also found in Cherson bespeaks ecclesiastical communication at a high level.[898] As the Life of John of Gothia reveals, such close communication took place in the late eighth century. It was from Cherson to Amastris (the city that loved God) that John fled and where he died. It is also from whence he performed his miracles.[899]

The Church in the Citadel and the Basilica within the Basilica can be seen to represent two forms of then contemporary church building of either the ninth or the early tenth century, one representing a standard form possibly exported from the capital and the other an expression of local patterns. That the Basilica within the Basilica represented an early rather than later tenth-century construction is supported by a consideration of the remaining buildings of interest.

3.3.3. Cruciform domed church (No.9) (fig. 3[e]).

This structure has already been mentioned as part of the small group of cross-in-square churches built in Cherson. It is, together with No. 34, one of the earliest of that

[896] *DAI* 53/ 512-535.
[897] Zavagno (2009), 147.
[898] SBS 4, 148.
[899] VJG 4/ 44-5, 5/ 64-5, 6/ 89-94. M-F Auzépy (2006), 80-2.

type so far found in the city. It is being given more close consideration than No. 34 because significantly more survives of the structure.

It is situated in Block 51, one block northwest from the Basilica within the Basilica. Like the bulk of the other structures in Cherson it is aligned on a northeast axis. It is a triple apsed structure with a narthex (fig. 74). Within the naos are four stone piers in square cross section with corresponding buttressing on the walls opposite. It is clear that these points carried the vaulting for a dome.

Only three or four courses of very roughly squared stone remain of the superstructure. What is visible appears to be laid in rough courses but without any regard to bonding. Carefully squared stone has been used for corner piers and pilasters. There is evidence of the use of spoil (a section of a column appears in the south-east wall) and fragments of brick and tile in the walls as leveling elements (fig.75).

In the narthex wall there is access to an extensive area of underground vaulting beneath this church. The vaulting is clearly visible from various points from within the naos and it extends in both transverse and longitudinal direction beneath the whole expanse of the building (fig. 76). Archaeological reports confirm that in the lower section were six massive buttresses and four stone pillars.[900] Notwithstanding the roughness of the masonry the church has architectural complexity and has been constructed with some confidence. That suggests some established expertise on the part of the builders in this format.

[900] Romanchuk (2000), 232.

Figure 74.

Cherson. Cruciform Domed Church No. 9 from the east.

Figure 75.

Cherson. Cruciform Domed Church No. 9. Masonry detail.

The discovery of tenth-century coins (the earliest of Romanos I Lekapenos [920-44]) supplies firm dating criteria. One of the coins was a gold *nomisma* of John I Tsimiskes (969-76) suggesting the building had ecclesiastical importance.[901]On a stylistic basis, as already noted, the church bears close comparison with the original tenth century form of St. John, Kerch (fig. 79(a)). Both No. 9 and No. 34 share, with St. John, Kerch, not only the basic four point internal support of the basic cross-in-square and rounded apses but also the forward projection of a fully semi-circular central apse.

It seems probable that the cross-in-square format reached Cherson and its regions no earlier than the second half of the ninth century. There is no evidence of it being built in Amastris, Trebizond or Kerch (cities with which Cherson had verifiable contact). The form, as we have seen, did not appear in the Bulgar lands until Symeon's time on the basis of current evidence.[902] Whilst it appeared in Tirilye at the end of the eighth century, the form was then in somewhat undeveloped with the spatial layout lacking symmetry.[903] Church "H" at Side, dated to the ninth century still exhibits "lack of coordination in its details".[904] Evidently the form was still in the process of being resolved in the first half of the ninth century, in Asia Minor, and close by Constantinople.[905] The evidence of the *Vita Basilii* is that such resolution had been achieved by the second half.[906] The form represented by No. 9 and No.34 is basic but symmetrical and "fully formed". There is no sign of further developing the form with the addition of ambulatories or parekklesia, a process that had started in

[901] Romanchuk (2000), 232.
[902] It may have arrived in the time of Boris depending on the dating of the Palace church, Pliska referred to above, pp. 169-70. Ćurčić (2010), 284
[903] Ousterhout (2001), 12-13.
[904] Ibid, 13-14.
[905] Ousterhout (1999), 13. Tirilye is on the south shore of the Sea of Marmara.
[906] If the Nea Ekklesia was of such a form. See pp. 32-3.

Constantinople by the early tenth century. For that reason and the absence of surface articulation, it is reasonable to argue that they represent the earliest introductions of the form to the city from the capital during the tenth century.

If, as seems to be the case, the cross-in-square form as well as the Church in the Citadel were imports from the capital, their differences require explanation. The non-use of the cross-in-square form in the Church in the Citadel appears to date it earlier than Nos.9 and 34. The form of the apses in these structures differs from that in the Church in the Citadel in the absence, in the latter, of the dominantly projecting main apse. It will be recalled that the last mentioned feature was characteristic of the Basilica within the Basilica and the Basilica on the Hill (No. 14). It seems to have been a feature of Cherson and its regions (including Kerch). There would seem to be two influences continuing to differentiate certain of the Cherson churches one aspect of which results in a strong external structural emphasis and display. There is direct metropolitan influence at play in both forms. The aspect of strong external emphasis appears most strongly in the next structure to be considered.

3.3.4.. The Five Apsed Church (fig. 3 (a)).

3.3.4.1. General form and purpose.

This is yet a further structure erected in the western part of the city in a prominent position and sited adjacent to the major arterial street (figs 77 and 78). It is also to be associated with the expansion of the medieval city referred to above

Figure 76.

Cherson. Cruciform Domed Church No. 9. Vaulting.

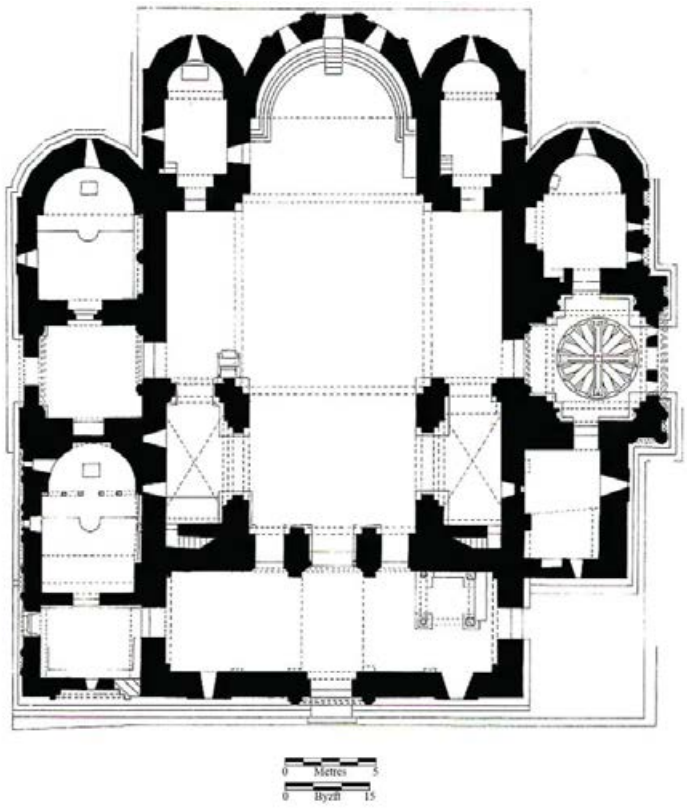
Figure 77.

Cherson. Five Apsed Church from the south.

Figure 78.

Cherson. Five Apsed Church from the southwest.

Figure 79.



Gelati. Monastery main church. Plan.

Notwithstanding the seeming complexity, at first sight, of the foundation plan, the structure is, in fact, at heart, a cruciform. Five additional spaces have been created by the enclosure of the north-west and south-west cross spaces and the addition of two apsed parekklesia.

The eastern arm carries a hemi-spherical apse and had a two step synthronon. The central apse projected significantly from its neighbours, being both stilted and fully semi-circular. The rounded apses of the immediately adjoining chambers themselves project forward from those, similarly formed, of the parekklesia. There is, thus, the appearance, in plan, of a pyramidal accumulation of apses.

The configuration of the cross arm walls suggests that the arms were vaulted and their mass in relation to the size of the structure, that those vaults carried a drum with a dome. Each of the four side chambers appears also to have carried a barrel vault, as probably did the two parekklesia.

It can be readily appreciated that there is very limited communication between the inner core and the surrounding chambers of the Five Apsed Church. The parekklesia could not be accessed directly from the core nor did the chambers either side of the bema communicate with it but could only be accessed from the northern and southern cross arms. The lack of direct communication indicates the latter did not function as pastophoria. Its synthronon suggests a building of ecclesiastical importance but the small size of its central nave area and the closing off of the various spaces surrounding it points to a restricted or private use. The whole ensemble may be best understood as a collection of self contained chapels around a small cruciform church.

That suggests a monastic purpose and, indeed the foundations of surrounding structures at the site could be readily understood as cells and other units commonly associated with an urban monastery.[907] The symmetrical accumulation of apsed cells about a core is reminiscent of Hagios Andreas, Peristerai (870-1), a monastic church.[908] Furthermore, that aspect of the church bears close comparison with the main church of the monastery of Gelati in western Georgia (fig.79), founded between 1106 and 1125 by David IV.[909] Like the Five Apsed Church, this church has chapels and other rooms symmetrically arranged about its core and, at the east end a five apsed façade, the apsed parekklesia set back behind the centre line of the main apse. Although on a vastly different scale the elements of external display revealed in the Gelati church may not be greatly dissimilar to how the Five Apsed Church may be reconstructed in elevation. Neubauer's description of the Gelati church is illuminating. The masses of the church arise *stufenförmig*, step-wise, to the dome, itself "lightly" shifted to the east. The many sectioned eastern façade, with its five apses of differing heights, also rises step-wise to the dome.[910] We can envisage that, in elevation, the Five Apsed Church would have displayed a pyramidal accumulation of masses matching the foundation plan.

3.3.4.2. Dating the structure.

[907] Mango (1985), 110. The absence of communication between the central cruciform core and its surrounding chambers closely recalls the arrangement of the church on Tavşan Adası off Amastris which, it will be recalled has been associated with the monastery of Patriarch Cyrus; see p. 101, above.

[908] Mango (1985), 116. Ćurčić (2010), 339-40. This church had an innovative design. It is known to have been built by a disciple of Methodios. It is an example in inventiveness in planning and design albeit executed somewhat crudely and with poor materials. Krautheimer (1986), 371. This, as we saw with the Cruciform Domed Church No.9, is not a novel phenomenon. H. Andreas is a cross domed church at core, bearing five domes in total. At the east there is a triple apsed arrangement with the central apse centred forward of its pastophoria. Each of the other arms of the cross terminates in the form of a triconch. Each cross arm carries a dome. For descriptions, plans and images, see Krautheimer (1986), 371-2 and Mango (1985), 116 & 125. It may not be without relevance that the building was not only monastic but also associated with those closely involved in the spreading of Orthodoxy.

[909] See Neubauer (1976), 182-8 for descriptions, images and plans.

[910] Ibid, 187.

The Five Apsed church has not been fully investigated and published since Brunov in the 1920s who ventured to suggest that it was the first of its kind in Byzantine architecture, and a model of fine artistic and technical execution.[911] Brunov had dated it to the tenth century because of the discovery of several coins of Romanos I but none of those were illustrated in reports or accurately described.[912] Whilst the latest interpretations of this church are eagerly awaited it is possible to draw some conclusions on its date on the basis of its visible structure and relationships with others of close stylistic resemblance. It is appropriate, particularly, to consider the Five Apsed Church in conjunction with another structure that had been built close by, a three apsed church (referred to hereafter as the Three Apsed Church).[913]

The latter church also occupies an elevated position in the western part of the city and is sited a short distance to the west of the Five Apsed Church. It is, likewise, adjacent to the same major arterial street of Cherson. Only the foundations and two or three courses of superstructure survive (figs 80 and 81). In plan the church comprised simply a central naos area with direct communication, through single doorways, to adjacent chambers of length equal to that of the naos. To the west was an appended narthex. The eastern end terminated in three semi-circular apses of which the central one was twice the diameter of its neighbours. The central apse seems to have contained a single step synthronon. The church was squat, measuring (internally) 8.24m wide and 7.76m long not including the apse. If the narrow narthex, at 1.79m

[911] The structure was first published in *Otchet Arkheologicheskoi Kommissii za 1906 god*, St Petersburg, 1909 and then discussed in Brunov (1932). A further publication is awaited following recent excavation and examination by a Polish team.
[912] Aibabin *et al* (2003), 82-3. A sign erected by the Preserve places the structure between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Since this age range does not, at present, appear in any published reports, it must be assumed that it stems from some conclusions reached by the Polish team mentioned above.
[913] This structure has yet to be published. The comments following are based upon the author's own observations and measurements on site.

Figure 80.

Cherson. The Three Apsed Church from the southwest.

Figure 81.

Cherson. The Three Apsed Church from the west.

wide, is included the ground plan is almost square. That feature is reminiscent of the Church in the Citadel. Furthermore the dimensions of the two are very alike. There are significant differences, however. A square arrangement of wall piers suggests a four point support for a dome. A combination of an absence of forechoirs and the appended narthex would have given the structure a definite eastward emphasis in elevation. Quite unlike what can be visualised for the Church in the Citadel, the Three Apsed Church was possessed of distinct external emphases. The presence of the dome also suggests a later building period for the latter.

The masonry is of large roughly squared limestone blocks laid more or less to courses. There is no evidence of façade articulation. This, together with a fully developed tripartite bema with rounded apses, suggests the structure was a product of the late ninth to the eleventh century (pp. 227-233).

The masonry of the Five Apsed Church is also of roughly but deliberately squared large stone laid in courses and with no evidence of surface modelling. The apses are all, as in the Three Apsed Church, rounded. The dimensions and relationship of the triple apsed bema between the two churches are close. In the Three Apsed Church the width of the central space is about 4.5m and the side chambers 1.9m. The corresponding spaces in the Five Apsed Church are 3.9m and 1.8m. The length of the central space, not including the apsed area, is 7.8m in the Three Apsed Church and 6.3m in the Five Apsed Church. The thickness of the wall in both is 0.81m. From a structural point of view, in both churches the dome is supported on wall piers at both east and western ends. Taking into account all these criteria as well as their physical

proximity both churches would seem to be products of the same period and, quite conceivably, the same building team.

It is more likely than not, however, that the Five Apsed Church is of a later date than its Three Apsed neighbour if only because there is some evidence that the former is built on the site of an earlier three apsed structure.[914] The period elapsing between the constructions of the two buildings need not, however, be much longer than between the first and second quarters of the century as may be revealed in the building programmes in Alania in the same century[915]. The relative complexity of the Five Apsed plan compared to that of the Three Apsed church also seems to suggest a later date. The Five Apsed, furthermore, bears comparison with St. John, Kerch (fig. 82[a]) and the cross-in-square churches Nos.9 and 34 discussed above in relation to external display.[916] All of them share the feature of the forward centred central apse. In the Five Apsed it is much more pronounced and represents, perhaps a later development of the feature. It seems possible to date the Five Apsed Church to the latter part of the tenth century, possibly even to the start of the eleventh but not later.

3.4. Summary.

There was clearly a surge of fresh building in Cherson dateable to between the late ninth and the start of the eleventh centuries. A further period followed later in the eleventh characterised by external surface articulation. The former surge is to be readily associated with the city's growth in status in that period.

[914] Evidence in the form of traces of apse foundation has seemingly been uncovered by the Polish team involved in the examination of the site. The traces are illustrated on the tourist information board at the site.
[915] This will be considered below, pp. 260-7.
[916] Pp. 247-50.

The group of churches erected in that time had a variety of forms, traditional single apsed three aised basilicas, cross domed structures continuing established forms but altered to meet changed liturgical needs, undomed aisled basilicas terminating in triple apses and the basic form cross-in-square. All of them had plain, unarticulated external surfaces. In none has there been any evidence uncovered of surface decoration but it is not a tenable position to conclude they did not have any.

What is revealed is a differentiation between buildings exhibiting external structural display and those where that feature seems signally absent. Such display was primarily through a prominent single or main apse but also took the form of a directional emphasis of masses in elevation. The emphatic apse appears to have been a feature of Chersonite building that it shared with other regions but not the capital.

In the mid-ninth century it seems a “standard” utilitarian pattern was introduced, by implication from the capital, as part of the building to accommodate the administration for the newly created theme. In this there is no sign of structural emphasis. It simply complies with liturgical requirements. At the same time a form with marked elements of display is erected, probably by a member of the local elite. Not long afterwards the basic cross-in-square arrived, also from the capital yet exhibiting structural display through a pronounced central apse. By the close of the tenth century churches were being built developing structural display further through eastward emphasis of masses and pyramidal apse formations. Two forms of church building tradition persist in the city, both imported from the capital. The explanation as to why this was the case may lie in the twin importance Cherson had to the empire, and to Orthodoxy, in our period.

3.5. Cherson and the architecture of conversion.

It will be recalled that the city was not only the focus of imperial attention for strategic military purposes but it was also the centre for proselytising activity.[917] Cherson and its immediate mountain hinterland had been a lonely bastion of the Orthodox faith since the sixth century and had gradually Christianised the surrounding regions. This is revealed by the number of churches built over that time in Mangoup, Eski-Kermen, Inkerman, and Kerch.[918]

The interest of both church and state in conversion on the north Black Sea was given added focus because Byzantium was not the only force involved in that activity amongst the people there. Khazar and Muslim sources record the Khazar king inviting delegations from both Christians and Muslims to argue their respective cases.[919] At the other end of our period the Primary Chronicle suggests the Khazars and the Black Bulgars were seeking to convert the Rus' to Judaism and Islam respectively in 986.[920] In the first half of the tenth century an Arab missionary, Ibn Fadlan, is sent by the caliph to instruct the king of the Black Bulgars in the Muslim faith and to arrange the building of a mosque for him.[921] It can be deduced from the latter source how important to the conversion process the building of identifiably appropriate structures

[917] See pp. 222-225 above.
[918] Aibabin *et al* (2003), 22-87, Tables 8, 21 and 25, pp. 94, 107 and 111.
[919] The Schechter Text, fol. 1, *recto*, 16-23 and *verso*, 1-13. Golb and Pritsak (1982), pp. 109-111. Dunlop argues that the recording of such a tradition (of disputation) is unique among Arab sources available. The source asserts that the Muslim sent was unable to argue his case because someone poisoned him, the implication being that, otherwise, the Muslim case would have been overwhelming; Dunlop (1967), 90.
[920] Possibly this was an interpolation since the source seemingly differentiates between western and eastern Christianity, identifying them as separate religious faiths. There is no evidence that this was a prevalent view prior to the great schism, 1054. Cross and Sherboeitz-Wetzor (1953), 245-6, nn 92 and 93. The Black Bulgars themselves were a product of Muslim conversion practises within the caliphate's zones of influence.
[921] Ibn Fadlan, 25.

for the celebration of the faith was.We shall see a similar attitude displayed by the church. It was important for both Orthodoxy and Islam that the landscapes as well as the people were "converted".

It is of relevance to this discussion to note that by the ninth century Islam had developed its own distinctive externally expressive architecture, one clearly recognisable as such by the author and readers of Theophanes Continuatus and acknowledged in the forms of the Bryas palace complex. Descriptions by John the Grammarian of the Arab palaces at Baghdad and in Syria generally reportedly inspired Bryas.[922] We know from Arab sources that the city and palace of Baghdad was full of external architectural symbolism with its round shape and the caliph's palace at its hub, monumental gateways with domed reception halls and the palace itself comprising ascending domed elements culminating in a great "Heavenly Dome" capped by an automaton statue, (a city higher in elevation and more perfectly round than any other in the eyes of contemporary Arab authors).[923] Surviving remains of

[922] Theo. Cont. pp. 98f. See above pp. 37-41. Baghdad was founded *de novo* by al-Mansur in ca. 762.
[923] Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, El Cheikh (2004), 152. See also al-Ya'qubi, *Kutab al-Buldan*, 240 for a description of the circular plan of the city with the palace at its hub. See also Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Madina. (2001), 51-2; Gutas (1998), 51-2. The concept of the perfectly round city with cosmological significance was not new at the time Baghdad was conceived. Heavenly Jerusalem was likewise imagined and was itself seen as the geographic centre of the world following Ezekial (5:5). Such an image can be seen displayed in the medieval *mappa mundi*. Nevertheless al-Ya'qubi considered Baghdad to be a unique expression. Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Madina. (2001), 51; Northedge (2005), 250. It is likely Byzantines viewed it similarly. This direct association expressed in monumental architecture between the earthly and heavenly powers had not been attempted by Byzantine builders either before or, so far as can be ascertained, after Baghdad. There is certainly no hint of it in Theophanes Continuatus. The idea of a composite caliphal city with a hierarchical composition also found a distinct expression in a newly founded city just outside of Cordoba at Madinat al-Zahra built by Abd al-Rahman III after he had adopted the title of caliph in 929. It seems clear that it was inspired by Samarra. Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Madina (2001), 89. Here there was a palace, administration and military sections and a congressional mosque. The city, moreover, was built into a hillside whose slope provided the basis of a series of stepped terraces that aided the visible expression of hierarchy between the palace complex at the top and other zones in an arrangement "fundamentally iconographic". Triano (2005), 74. The laying out of the city was on a precise geometric pattern reminiscent, in that sense, of the perfect geometric circle of Baghdad.

'Abbasid buildings at Samarra and elsewhere reveal dramatic forms of external surface articulation and embellishment.[924] In the 'Abbasid era the minaret was developed into a feature of enormous expressiveness broadcasting the presence of Islam on the landscape.[925] Thus not only was 'Abbasid architecture distinctive externally it was being enlisted to display authority and proclaim the supremacy of the faith. We may suppose that the mosque type the building of which Ibn Fadlan was to oversee for the Black Bulgars was suitably expressive in the north Black Sea region. We should not be surprised to find Byzantium developing a similarly externally expressive church form to project Orthodox ideology in lands neighbouring and among peoples yet to be converted. We do perceive such activity in the source material relating to the conversion of the Alans, as we shall see. The need to develop such architecture was given greater urgency because of the growing presence and importance, to the empire, of the Rus'

A common thread to our discussion of the region and the three cities has been the pervading presence of the Rus'. It has been observed how different they were to the other groups to the north of the Black Sea; they had naval expertise and displayed

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[924] Huge cylindrical towers were appended to monumental gateways purely for display; blind arcading and recessed planes enlivened walls. For a description and image of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sarqi see ibid, 36-7; for Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, Al-Ush, Joundi and Zouhdi (1999), 144-149 and fig. 1; for the architecture of Umayyad palace structures generally, Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Madina (2001), 36-42 and Grabar (1964), 75-9; for a descriptive catalogue of Jordanian palaces see Hashem (2000), 110-139. At Samarra founded between 834-6 by al-Mu'tasim as the new 'Abbasid capital, it appears all exterior surfaces of place buildings were covered in repeating patterns of stucco. For discussion of Samarran buildings see Northedge (2005), 32, 36 and Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Madina (2001), 57-8.

[925] Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Madina (2001), 21-2, 30-1. The minarets at Samarra were enormous spiral structures surviving intact to the present day as does the equally monumental forms at Fustat and Qayrawan. Ibid. It can hardly be doubted that the mosque attached to the caliphal palace at Baghdad would have been on an equal scale of monumentality. Grabar cites the erection of minarets in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem in the thirteenth century after the defeat of the Crusader state as an unambiguous declaration of victory of Islam over Christianity. Grabar (1988), 57.

ferocity and tenacious energy in war and trade. By the end of the ninth century the Dnieper Rus' had become a permanent and formidable presence in the region but had also coalesced into a coherent grouping who could act politically as one and, in 907 could enter treaty obligations with Byzantium governing trade and regulating behaviour. The Rus', furthermore, had created permanent settlements in the region, both in the capital and in Cherson and, in the latter, were exercising political authority in the tenth century. All this is readily ascertainable from the sources we have considered. It is also apparent how highly, beginning in 861with the mission of Cyril and Methodios at least, Byzantium rated the importance of converting the Rus' to Orthodoxy.

We also see from Ibn Fadlan and other Arab sources[926] that the Rus' were active in trading and raiding in the lands of the caliphate. We may imagine that Byzantium looked with alarm at the prospect of a conversion of Rus' (we may recall the possibility that the Volga Rus' may have been responsible for destructive raids on Byzantine territory to the north and east of the Black Sea)[927] and then confronting Byzantine interests in the "Sea of Rum" further fortified by religious zeal.

3.5.1. Alania.

The extent to which the Constantinopolitan patriarchate provided the driving force in conversion activity is revealed by the actions of Nicholas I Mystikos in the conversion of the Alans. In his second patriarchate (912 – 25) he dispatched to Alania, as soon as

[926] Almas'ūdī, in *Murūj aldahab* (943-7), Golb and Pritsak (1982), 50-2.
[927] See pp. 85-7 above.

his patriarchate had commenced, a bishop and episcopal clergy to take over from missionaries who had been labouring in the region for some time previously. Pressure is applied to achieve wholesale conversion as rapidly as possible and the problems associated with this are clearly revealed in an exchange of correspondence between the patriarch and his archbishop there, and also with the Prince of Abasgia who is urged to supply assistance, which must be taken to mean logistical and possibly artisanal help, with the construction of churches.[928] The concern on the part of the patriarch that the mission succeeded is clear.[929] The mission was a success, and within a relatively short space of ten or fewer years.[930]

It is possible that, as a result of that activity, we possess some evidence of what the church considered were standard forms for a church building after the first quarter of the tenth century and appropriate for expressing Orthodoxy in newly converted lands. There was active involvement of nearby regions in this process. Abasgia was specifically mentioned but it is known that he also engaged the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities of Cherson in his endeavours generally.[931]

There are some church structures which remain in this region, the dating of which is problematic, but clearly have a *terminus post quem* of 912. There were Christians in Alania before the second patriarchate but conversion was piecemeal involving

[928] There is no suggestion of military help being needed. As the pages of the *DAI* indicate, Alania was an ally on which the empire could rely particularly in keeping the Khazars in line. *DAI* 10/4-7; 11/3-13.
[929] NCP, *Letters*, *133*. 46.
[930] The period of the second patriarchate of Nicholas. Even if that is too bold an assertion it was certainly achieved by 932 when although the area then reverted to Khazar control for a period, reestablishment of episcopal authority was rapid thereafter.
[931] NCP, *Letters*, *46* and *51* (to the Prince of Abasgia in respect of assistance given to both the archbishop and Prince of Alania. *Letters*, *68* (to the *strategos* of Cherson); *Letters*, *106* (to the archbishop of Cherson (in both referring to help having been given in conversion of the Khazars. .

individuals and small groups.[932] Ibn Rustih reports that, at the beginning of the tenth century, although the king was Christian his subjects were pagan.[933] The second mission sent after 916 – 918 was clearly aimed at the baptism of the whole populace.[934]

The seat of the metropolitan of Alania has been identified as Nijnii Arkhyz which is well preserved.[935] Three large churches were erected within the episcopal complex.[936] The northernmost on the site has been identified as the first ecclesiastical structure built there, which served as the cathedral.[937]

The foundation plan reveals a cross-in-square arrangement with the "standard" tripartite bema carrying semicircular apses on the exterior. The central apse is wider and is centred further eastwards than those of the pastophoria. The physical remains include a tall simple circular drum. Although it is centred on the naos, by reason of the bulk of an adjoining narthex (whose northern and southern walls are contiguous with the naos walls and extend the building by as much as a half again of the naos) the dome appears to be positioned emphatically eastwards. In these details it has a number of similarities in layout to the church of St. John, Kerch (fig. 82[a]). In dimensions (15m x 0m) they are almost identical. With its vaulted forechoir it is also

[932] Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 25-6.
[933] Ibid, 29.
[934] NCP, *Letters, 52*, 75-90. This letter to the archbishop of Alania included advice on how to deal with different strata of populace in order to achieve the "salvation of the whole nation". Christian clergy were expelled following a reassertion of Khazar authority ca. 932 but the Alans seemingly retained a preference for Orthodoxy since, once the Khazar authority was once again extinguished, reassertion of clerical authority appears to have been quickly and efficiently re-established. Constantine VII referred to the Alanian king as "Spiritual Son", the equivalent in status to the kings of Armenian and Bulgaria, providing a *terminus ante quem* of full re-establishment of Orthodoxy of 954. *De Ceremoniis*, ii, 48, p. 688. Obolensky (1971), 235.
[935] Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 32-40. Kovalevskaya (1981), 224-228, 225 and 271 (fig. 93) described there as a product of an eastern Byzantine "school".
[936] The settlement also includes eleven small churches or chapels for private use.
[937] Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 32.

reminiscent of the cathedral church at Mokvi (fig. 84[a]).[938] It has been suggested that the North Church was erected at the beginning of the tenth century, coincident with the initial conversion of Alania between 912/16 and 932.[939]

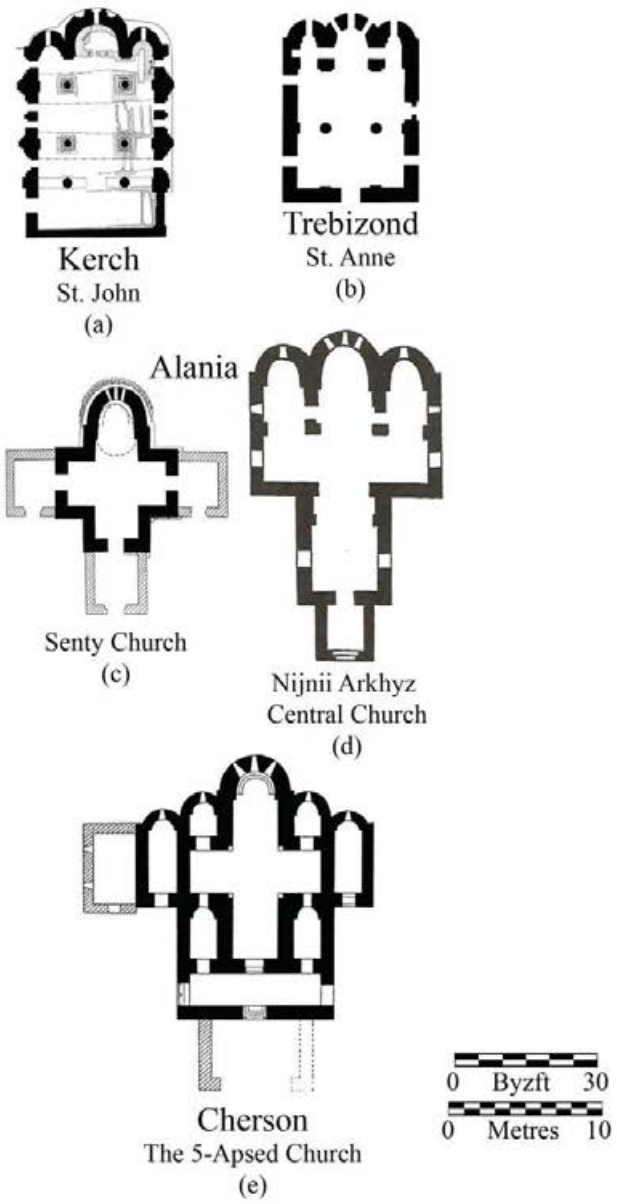
Of differing arrangements are two other structures in the same complex, the Central and the South Churches.The Central Church (fig. 82 [d])[940] is, at heart, a form of cross domed church where the pastophoria communicate fully with the north and south cross arms; indeed the north and south flank walls of the pastophoria are co-extensive with the north and south walls of the cross arms. This creates an exceptionally broad open space behind the bema and beneath the dome. The tripartite bema is similar to that of the North Church, including a slight forward centring of the central apse, as is the form of the drum. The core, however, is not a Greek cross. The west cross arm is extended by as much as a third again. This is unusual. The core arrangement is most reminiscent of the Three Apsed Church in Cherson.

The design, both in plan and elevation, emphasises the eastern end which includes the dome. From the east the view of the church would hardly differ from the appearances of any other standard churches of the time. Viewed, however, from other angles the absence of western bulk gives the building a pronounced vertical emphasis biased distinctly to the east.

The other church in the same area, the South Church, is a basic cross-in-square type. In plan it has a squat, almost square shape with an equi-centred tripartite apsed east

[938] See further below pp. 223-224.
[939] Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 32.
[940] For a brief description, plan and photograph see Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 34-5.

Figure 82.



Church plans: Kerch, Trebizond, Alania, Cherson.

façade.[941] In size (10m long by 7.5m wide including the apses) and plan it is highly reminiscent of the Church in the Citadel in Cherson, a simple, utilitarian design. It has been recorded that it was less well constructed than the other two structures.[942] It differs from the Citadel Church, however, by having a clear, unmistakable vertical emphasis through the drum and dome that is made more emphatic by the attenuation, relative to them, of the main body.

All three churches have been dated to the tenth century but a distinction can be drawn between the South Church on the one hand and the North and Central Churches on the other with implications for their respective dating. The relative roughness of construction of the South Church sets it apart as does its lack of structural emphasis, features clearly present in the other two.

Dating the North Church to the first period of conversion, at least in its present form, seems too bold. The first period was a relatively short one (sixteen years) in which, as we know from the correspondence with Nicholas I Mystikos, the Alanian archbishop faced resistence to his mission. It is likely the period would have seen the erection of churches of a simpler, utilitarian design, capable of being quickly erected and with less emphasis on choice of construction material (particularly when reliant on labour possibly imported from neighbouring Abasgia).[943] Such a description applies neatly to the South Church only.

[941] For a brief description and plan see Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 35-7.
[942] Ibid, 35.
[943] NCP, *Letters. 51*, 9-10 (An acknowledgement that the Prince of Abasgia had "devoted much care to the enlightenment of the Prince of Alania").

With regard to the other two churches they can be readily compared to structures we have examined in the Crimean peninsula, notably, for the North Church, St John the Baptist in Kerch and Churches Nos. 9 and 34 in Cherson, and for the Central Church, the Three Apsed Church in Cherson. On the basis of such comparisons the two churches can be ascribed to the middle of the tenth century or later, products of the second, and final, conversion period after the Khazar interregnum (932-954).[944] The relative ease and speed by which Orthodoxy was re-introduced in Alania after 954 showed that it had taken deep roots. It would be a period in which one might expect to see a greater degree of care taken in construction and larger and more expressive buildings erected.

How much later may be gauged by taking into account another church, in Senty, close to another major region of Christianity in Alania, Choana (fig. 82[c]). This region had great strategic importance lying athwart the crossing of two main routes between the Caucuses and the Black Sea coast.[945] The importance of the Senty church is that it has been firmly dated, through a dedicatory inscription in Greek, to 965 and which names the sponsors, one of which was the Metropolitan of Alania, Theodore.[946] The date is significant because it was after the restoration of Orthodoxy following the brief recovery of the region to the Khazars. As the inscription itself indicates, the status of Alania within the church hierarchy has by now been raised from an archbishopric to the province of a metropolitan.[947] The restoration and increased status was, almost certainly, accompanied by a renewed programme of building of which the Senty church was part.

[944] See p. 262 n. 934.
[945] Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 42-8 for a general description of the area and its structures.
[946] Beletsky and Vinogradov (2005), 132.
[947] Ibid, 141.

The inscription refers to renovation but excavators found no evidence of any rebuilding or redecoration. The church may have been constructed *de novo* on the foundations of a church present there from before 931.[948] That the church dates from after the restoration is also attested by the masonry which comprises carefully squared stone laid in regular courses.[949] As we have suggested with regard to the South Church of Nijnii Arkhyz such masonry was not representative of the early conversion years.

The original basic form is an equal armed domed cross. The dome is raised on a tall circular drum. Of interest is the form of the eastern arm. It is of equal length to those of the north and south (the western cross arm is slightly extended). To this arm is then attached a slightly stilted and fully hemispherical apse the length of which is the same again as that of the cross arm. This formation results in an emphatic display, not only of the apse itself, but also of the eastern aspect of the church.[950] The emphasis given to the apse in plan is revealed in elevation by its strong hemispherical form rising to drum level (fig.83). Once again we see external structural emphasis built into churches of the late tenth century in this region.

The building of the Senty church is, through the inscription, directly associated with both the secular and the ecclesiastical powers. The inscription announces not only the firm re-establishment of Orthodoxy but also the rise of Alania in ecclesiastical importance. The architecture both here and in Nijnii Arkhyz has been marshalled by its external expressiveness and directional force to show that Alania was now part of

[948] Beletsky and Vinogradov (2005), 138.
[949] Ibid, 130.
[950] Ibid, 131 (fig.1); Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1999), 46.

the Christian *oikoumene*. The process was driven by the Constantinopolitan patriarchate.

Figure 83.

Alania. Senty Church from the southeast. Reproduced from Kouznetsov, V. & I. Lebedynsky. 1999. *Les chrétiens disparus du Caucase. Histoire et archéologie du christianisme au Caucase du Nord et en Crimée*, Paris, p. 46.

3.5.2. Abasgia.

The involvement of Abasgia in the Christianisation of Alania prompts one to view what structures were erected in that region since, if it was artisanal assistance that was provided, certain forms of structure may have been regularly transmitted from one region to the other both during and after conversion. In any event the mere physical proximity would increase the possibilities of cultural transfer. There seems little doubt

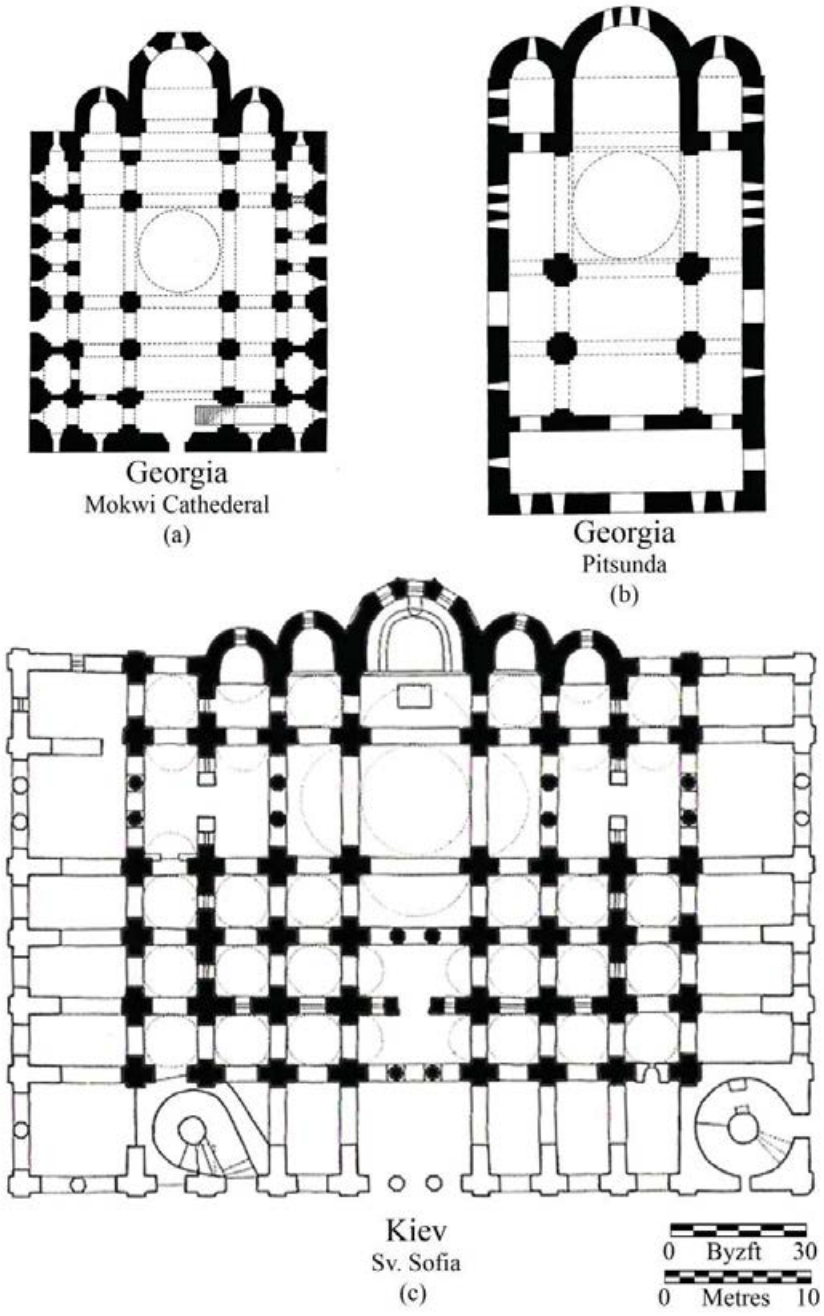
that Nicholas expected the Prince of Abasgia to furnish material assistance (it could hardly have been spiritual) and that the Prince had done so, at least at the courtly level.[951]

A cathedral structure at Mokvi, close to the Black Sea coast, is particularly of interest because of its singular plan (fig. 84[a]).[952] It is associated with the reign of Leo III of Abasgia (957-969). It had a cross-in-square core which had been expanded on all sides, by the regular multiplication of bays to create a three aisled church with narthex and exo-narthex. The central main apse was itself further extended eastwards through two extra bays. The pastophoria to the north and south were slightly stilted. The emphasis to the eastern end is clear in plan as is the hierarchical relationship between the main apse and the pastophoria.

The church was further expanded to the north, south and west by rows or aisles of additional spaces, symmetrically placed and clearly part of the original design. The terminal spaces at the east were set back from the line of the tripartite bema, further emphasising the hierarchical assemblage of eastern spaces in plan. The cathedral had a single dome raised on a particularly lofty, and architecturally dominant, round drum emphasising verticality. The central apse, as at the Senty Church, rose to drum level, the side apses to gallery level and again presenting, in elevation, a most imposing collection of masses particularly noteworthy from the east.[953] The whole arrangement was unique in the region and indeed, for its time, in the wider Georgian territories.[954] The association with Constantinople, in overall plan and appearance, seems widely

[951] NCP, *Letters. 46,* 26-30; *51*, 9-10. Material assistance and "comfort" is clearly referred to.
[952] Neubauer (1976), 95-6. Mepisaschwili and Zinzadse (1977), 112.
[953] An illustration of the south and west elevations is in Mepisaschwili and Zinzadse (1977), 113.
[954] Neubauer (1976), 96.

Figure 84



Church plans: Georgia and Kiev.

accepted, and particularly with the Church of Constantine Lips.[955] The three sided, strongly projecting main apse and the forechoirs before the apses are reminiscent of it. The apse shape suggests an importation of that form into this part of the Black Sea zone prior to its appearance in Cherson. The building, however, seems also to represent a significant further development in structural display through both the expansion of plan by the additional bays and the much greater projection of the main apse.

This emphasis on the predominance given to the central apse was achieved by other means than by forward centring. At the end of the tenth century a structure, more traditional in many respects but also closely related to the Mokvi church, was erected in Pitsunda (Byzantine Soterioupolis?[956]) (fig. 81 [b]). The cathedral dedicated to the Mother of God has its dome supported to the west by two free standing piers and to the east by wall piers extending from the main apse ensuring that the dome was visually, as well as structurally associated with the eastern elevation.[957] The east-west axis is specifically lengthened by the addition of two extra bays to the west of the dome area and the addition of a separate exonarthex. Notwithstanding that there is common centring, the east façade carries three prominent apses, the middle of which is particularly emphatic through its mass.[958]

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[955] Neubauer (1976), 96; Mepisaschwili and Zinzadse (1977), 112.
[956] The identification of Soterioupolis with Pitsunda is not universally accepted. Oikonomides, supported by Bryer identifies it with Yeniyol, much to the south on the Laz shore. Bryer and Winfield (1985), 347.
[957] For discussions of this church and its dating see Nuebauer (1976), 96; Mepisaschwili and Zinzadse (1977), 112.
[958] The accentuation of the apses through their masses is a notable feature. Neubauer (1976), 96. Outwardly this church bears similarity with the Panaghia, Skripou and St John in Mesembria but closer examination reveals differences in particular the inner support structure not being carried on four free standing piers and in the architectural prominence of the apses. It is also to be noted that there is little on this church in the way of external architectural decoration either through the articulation of surfaces or sculptural modelling or frieze embellishment unlike other areas of Georgia affected by entirely different developmental forces.

What is remarkable about the plan of this structure is the degree of congruence between it and the core of that of Sv. Sophia, Kiev (fig. 84[c]). If one looks at the twelve central bays of the latter the number, dimensions and proportions are extraordinarily similar to those of the Pitsunda church so much so that one could conceivably have been a blueprint for the other.

3.6. Summary.

We can see that, by the last decades of the tenth century, in the zones associated closely with conversion activities on the north Black Sea, structures displaying clear visible emphases, in plan and elevation, asserting those aspects of the church ideologically important for the Orthodox message, the dome, the eastern end and their close association. Constantinopolitan influences can be detected but those emphases do not seem to be readily associated with the two metropolitan structures, the Myrelaion and the Church of Constantine Lips, that represent tenth century building. Their presence can be seen to be related to a need to display an ideology that would be unecesary in the Orthodox capital but vital among the yet to be converted.

In Cherson we can see basic forms with the features in question as products of a period no earlier than the mid-tenth century. By the end of the century these forms have become expanded by the symmetrical addition of spaces about the core resulting in a structure in which all elements of structural display are arrayed creating a clear hierarchy of spaces in plan and almost certainly in elevation.

How matters then developed is illustrated by the Mokvi cathedral. Here the central space was considerably expanded by the symmetrical addition of a large number of bays creating a structure equal in ground plan area to the large sixth century basilicas (compare the Old Metropolis, Mesembria, fig. 3 [f]). In that, the church was following, perhaps, a scheme imported from the capital (and also the polygonal apse) but also clearly displaying the locally developed elements of structural emphasis, the strongly projecting central apse, the eastern "push" of masses.

It seems possible that the builders of Cherson played a significant part in the formulation and dissemination of a church design with deliberate external structural display and one that was associated closely with the city's involvement with the conversion to Orthodoxy of regions to the north of the Black Sea.

4. Sv. Sophia, Kiev.

We have seen the role the sources show Cherson to have had in the conversion activities on the north Black Sea throughout our period. We have likewise observed the interconnectedness between the city, Abasgia, Alania and the capital. We are also aware from the sources the status that Cherson and its clergy enjoyed for Vladimir in great part, no doubt, because of settled populations of Rus' there. Is it possible to see a parallel connectedness in the architecture of Sv. Sophia?

Many of the elements of external display exhibited at Sv. Sophia, Kiev (the hierarchical ground plan, emphatic tripartite apse and the broad plan expanded by the multiplication of spaces) can be identified together in structures in the Crimea,

Abasgia and Alania. It is difficult, furthermore, to avoid observing the striking similarities in ground plans of variously, the Five Apsed Church, the Mokvi Cathedral, the Pitsunda church, the monastery church at Gelati and Sv. Sophia; the symmetric arrangement of chambers at the east end about the central core creating the emphatic pyramidal projection of masses and the almost certain translation of that plan into a similar vertical ascension to the main dome as revealed in both the surviving structure at Gelati and the original form of Sv. Sophia (fig. 1). It is surely reasonable to posit some commonality in the source of inspiration for the plans for each of them. Whether that source was some inspirational building in Cherson is a matter of conjecture. It is as equally possible that the Five Apsed church was inspired by Sv. Sophia, Kiev having regard to the proposed dating for the former. Nevertheless the cultural flow, on conversion, was explicitly from Cherson to Kiev.

Sv. Sophia was not part of the original building programme of Vladimir but was a product of a period some thirty or forty years thereafter during which Orthodox Christianity had become more firmly established and more than one monumental stone structure had been erected.[959]

The surviving remains of the first stone church established by Vladimir, the Tithe Church, did not, seemingly, have any of the display elements. What is revealed is the form of a three aisled structure with an equi-centred triple apsed bema. There is a continuing debate as to the form the superstructure took.[960] The excavated remains

[959] Callmer (1981), 41. The Church of the Transfiguration at Chernigov was started in 1017 by Yaroslav's brother. Hamilton (1983), 31-2.
[960] Mango considers it to have been a cross-in-square type with a central dome. Mango (1985), 181. Logvin has argued strongly that it was a five-domed basilical church similar in form to the Church of the Transfiguration, Chernigov, and completed ca.1036. He argues that all the monumental churches of the eleventh to the beginning of the twelfth centuries had five domes and that the core of Sv. Sophia

show that the recessed brick technique was used in the walls, pointing to a Constantinopolitan source for the builder and, by extension, the plan. Whatever the form the external elevation took, however, the foundations suggest a conservative form with no eastern emphasis in the apse arrangement. This is not a surprise. The Tithe Church, a palatine church, was not designed to carry any message than closeness to the imperial capital.[961]

Sv. Sophia served a different purpose for the Rus' state. The church was never intended to be merely the metropolitan cathedral of the capital, nor be seen as palatine. It was built as some distance from the palace area. Its functions were broader and more varied. It housed a library at gallery level into which, according to the Primary Chronicle, Yaroslav deposited those books he wrote himself.[962] It was also the residence of the Metropolitan. It served as a point of reception for high level diplomatic meetings.[963] It had to be seen and understood in a way quite unlike any other church in Rus'. It was to stand in the same relationship to Rus' as its namesake in Constantinople stood for both the empire and Orthodoxy. It had a clear symbolic function. The structural display was significantly enhanced by the cumulatively arranged thirteen domes. What better form to adopt for that purpose than those associated with the bringing of Orthodoxy to the north Black Sea regions.

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was also of that form. Logvin (1988), 227. The foundations could certainly accommodate such a design as they could a simple basilica as posited by Hamilton on the basis that Cherson boasted monumental basilicas. Hamilton (1983), 21-2.

[961] The Church of the Transfiguration was also a princely cathedral begun by Yaroslav's brother Mstislav and completed by Yaroslav on the former's death. For a brief description and plan see Faensen and Ivanov (1975), 336. There is an absence of structural emphasis in the plan. The domed zone is separated from the bema by a large triple-bay forechoir thereby reducing eastern emphasis. A further set of three narrow bays divide that area from the apses. Whilst that arrangement is similar to that in the Mokvi church, there is no emphasis given to the central apse.

[962] PC 6545 (1037).

[963] Lohvyn (2001), 348.

There is every reason to consider that a connection with Cherson persisted into the building period of Sv. Sophia. The Primary Chronicle records that the cleric Anastasius of Cherson whom Vladimir took back to Kiev and to whom he entrusted the Tithe Church, was still in office at the time Svjatopolk took Kiev in 1018.[964] Vladimir had taken other Chersonite clergy with him at the same time. It seems likely that such clergy, like Anastasius, had remained as perhaps did the "Greek" (i.e. Byzantine) artisans Vladimir took to build the new stone churches or had been instrumental in building up local workshops. There was certainly an extensive programme of work for them. The *Paterik* reveals how the icon painters sent from Constantinople remained in Kiev for life.[965] Master masons may well have done the same and thus become involved in the construction of Sv. Sophia.

Where else the builders may have come is an open question. What does get a mention in source material, albeit unconnected with building, is Abasgia. The *Paterik* reveals that, accompanying the icon painters who had come from Constantinople, were Greek and Abasgian merchants.[966] It is of note that the compiler of the text considered it appropriate to mention the Abasgians. One explanation may be that they, like the Greeks, were frequent and regular visitors to Kiev representing a strong trading link. Such a link would also be an avenue for cultural exchange. The great cathedral at Mokvi would readily have supplied a blueprint for Yaroslav of earthly power and authority.

[964] PC, 6526 (1018). Indeed Anastasius, "through flattery", had so ingratiated himself with Boleslav, the Polish ally of Svjatopolk, that he was made steward of his property.
[965] *Paterik*, Discourse 4, 12.
[966] Ibid, 11.

5. The church as symbol.

We have seen the interconnections in the process of the spreading of Orthodoxy across the nations north of the Black Sea. Driven by the Constantinopolitan patriarchate they link Cherson, Alania, Abasgia and Kievan Rus'. Church and state are closely involved in the process. Princes and imperial administrators all play their part and not only locally. It was the emperor personally, after all, who is credited in the Primary Chronicle with astounding the Rus' with the glories of Orthodox worship in Constantinople.[967] A distinctive, expressive and directional architecture has been developed to project the faith.

I am arguing, therefore, that, by reason of this architectural development and the underlying purpose for it, the church building itself, as perceived from the outside, had become symbolic. The eschewing of any other form of embellishment ensured that there was no dilution of the power of the form.[968] That, by the late tenth century at least, the exterior form of the church had become symbolically important is revealed by evidence from the decorative arts. Ćurčić has recently shown how representations of the church had become directionally expressive.[969] He notes how the form of the model of Hagia Sophia being presented to Christ in the narthex mosaic

[967] PC 6495 (987).
[968] We may perhaps detect a parallel concern expressed during the second Iconoclasm. The sources suggest that the concern of Michael II and his son Theophilos was not so much about the existence of images but rather the effect they might have upon the "ignorant". Thus images were to be placed away from positions near the ground. Those placed high were permissible as didactic. There was also palpable concern that images had supplanted the "life-giving crosses" in churches, the very identity of Christianity as a faith and the image that directly related to its message. *Letter of the Emperors Michael II and Theophilos to Louis the Pious* (824), text *in Monumenta Germaniae historica, Leges, Sect*. III, ii/2 (1908), 478 f; trans. Mango (1972), 157-8. One might conjecture that of the "ignorant" for whom icons would serve no purpose would certainly include unconverted peoples for whom a simple strong representation of the faith was necessary.
[949] Ćurčić (2010)a, 14-17..

in H. Sophia dramatically emphasises the dome so that it seems out of all proportion to the remainder of the building, that it is topped with a nimbed cross of great size and with a single apse projecting strongly.[970] Bases for processional crosses, dateable to the tenth and eleventh centuries, reveal forms deliberately emphasising verticality through a combination of a tall drum and steep "naos" on an attenuated base.[971] Ćurčić argues that these are symbolic representations of a church building seen as the container for the uncontainable heavenly realm whereby an accurate representation of scale would be meaningless.[972] It is submitted that they represent however, albeit in exaggerated forms, the emphases actually given to church construction by the tenth century where presentation of the power of the faith was important. We meet that emphasis in the source description of the dimensions of the Theotokos church built in the eleventh century in the Caves Monastery in Kiev. The *Paterik* details measurements (miraculously revealed and taken from the belt of Christ)[973] of a squat building of thirty by twenty cubits and thirty cubits in height but reaching to fifty when the drum and dome are included, producing a structure with dramatic vertical ascension.[974] The role of the emperor in revealing the faith to the newly, or to be, converted, referred to above, is also manifested in this source. The building was said to have been erected with the active assistance of artisans from Constantinople, "sent" by the Theotokos herself, in the guise of an empress.[975]

Cherson was at the heart of the development of this architectural development. Whether or not churches such as the Five Apsed Church directly inspired Sv. Sophia,

[970] Ćurčić (2010)a, 14-15.
[971] Ibid, 22-3. For examples see Ćurčić & Hadjitryphonos (2010), cat. nos. 43 (p. 260), 44 (p. 262) and 47 (p. 268).
[972] Ćurčić (2010)a, 13-14.
[973] *Paterik,* Discourse 1, pp. 2-3. Discourse 2, p. 7.
[974] Ibid, Discourse 1, p. 3.
[975] Ibid, Discourse 2, pp. 6-8.

Kiev and the other structures discussed above, the city's position as a stronghold of Orthodoxy at the time of Byzantium's conversion activities cannot be denied nor that it was there that the suitably expressive architecture was erected. Nor can one discount the possible involvement of monasteries based in Cherson (if the Five Apsed Church was monastic) in the process of conversion and the export of architectural forms. The *Paterik* reveals such a process at work. During the reign of Vladimir (980-1015), St Antonij, the founder of the Caves Monastery at Kiev, goes to Athos (after being in Constantinople) and, having been tonsured, is persuaded to return to Rus' to establish the monastic tradition there.[976]

The form of display through structure is linked strongly with Cherson. Unlike the forms of ornament and surface modelling we have met in Amastris and Mesembria, it has been specifically marshalled to aid a Byzantine policy of conversion.

[976] *Paterik*, Discourse 7, 18-19.

V. THE THREE BLACK SEA CITIES: REVIEW OF THE MONUMENTS.

In Chapter 1 I intimated that, through this study, answers to certain specific questions may suggest themselves, namely: what is the possibility of discerning a more nuanced typological division of external architectural display: when, and in what circumstances the impulse for external display may have arisen: what were the purposes originally, and in our period, for external display: what, if any, lines of influence within the region can be detected - the issue of the export of forms? I consider that it is possible, with the information now gleaned, to attempt to deal with those issues.

1. Typological division.

The forms discerned fall into the traditional typological groups; surface ornament and surface articulation to which we may now add display through structure. The examination, however, suggests additional divisions can be identified, linked with the issues of purpose and audience.

In both Amastris and Mesembria spoil has been introduced into the masonry but only in the former was the choice seemingly significant as being possessed of meaning and linked the churches strongly with the city walls. That factor suggests that, in considering how to distinguish various aspects of external display, the issue of meaning needs to be considered. The mere embellishment, of course, carried its own message by highlighting the presence of the building within its surroundings but some external display can be seen to go beyond that.

The hierarchical emphasis of the Five-Apsed Church in Cherson is clearly a building whose meaning can be readily related to the cosmological outlook of Orthodoxy as well as a general Byzantine world view.

In all three cities structures were found adorned with simple single crosses. This element was also found on the defensive walls of Amastris. Its placement was, unlike early Christian examples, unassociated with entrances and clearly was for supernatural protection. It was placed in visible zones, in Amastris and Mesembria on the south flank wall of respectively, FC and St Stephen. In the defensive walls of Amastris it was placed high and beyond reach of defacement but clearly visible and "legible". The use of a cross in this way invites discussion on the role of symbols, post iconoclasm, against evil as well as an altered view of the meaning of the church building.

St Stephen in Mesembria also seems to have been the vehicle for the display of imperial power and authority, through the use of architectural elements, in zones either recovered to the empire or in a hoped for reunited *imperium*. Viewed in such a manner it bears comparison with the church of Holy Cross, Aght'amar, an almost contemporary structure. Jones has identified the exterior sculpture there as linked with, or revealing, a prince's duty to the state and as an expression of legitimate kingship.[977]

In the church of St John Mesembria and the two churches of Amastris we see surface embellishment applied in different ways for differing effects. In St John the brick

[977] Jones (2007), 8-9 and 127.

patterns are incorporated within, and emphasise, zones of importance, entrances and the windows of the apse. Brick is also used in surface modelling to emphasis the drum of the dome. This is not display of the whole building but of important parts of it. The external display relates directly to internal activities and the "canonical zones" of the building. The display is ancillary and subordinate to interior meanings. Except for the tall drum on the Koubelidiki church, this differs significantly from how external display is used in Kastoria where patterns in brick adorn all surfaces and there is little discrimination in placement.

The churches of Amastris have, in this regard, more in common with Kastoria than with Mesembria. Not that embellishment has been necessarily applied indiscriminately in Amastris. The reticulate brickwork on both churches has been applied to the uppermost registers and the apse. A similar prioritising of upper registers and the drum can be seen in the Kastorian churches where more elaborate patterns, chevrons and wheels are all applied to upper registers and eastern facades.

It can be seen that the outside embellishments are intended to be "read" in different ways. Indeed, as far as the Kastorian decoration is concerned, "legibility" seems a most appropriate description since the brick patterns form recognisable letters (albeit sometimes reversed). True legibility is, of course, the essential characteristic of the embellishment to the apse of the Panaghia at Skripou (one of the earliest accurately datable Byzantine churches that bears exterior embellishment).

The typology of external display can, therefore, firstly be divided between that which relates directly to function and purpose and that where the embellishment simply

identifies and emphasises the building as a structure. A second typological division is between that which carries meaning (and it may be either Christological or secular) i.e. is either legible or has the appearance of being so, and that which comprised simple unidirectional unemphatic patterns.

Such classification does not necessarily greatly aid discussion of churches (and other structures) after the mid-eleventh century because, by then, various types had become mixed. The typology might, however, assist in identifying how the elements of external display came to be initially introduced into Byzantine building and the continuing purpose or purposes in our period.

The most significant division ascertained in this study has been between surface ornament and embellishment on the one hand and display through structure on the other. When, at the close of the tenth century, structural display becomes most expressive we find the form signally "unencumbered" by embellishment. The division is an important indicator both of when the church (both secular and monastic) becomes aware of the exterior of the church building and the role it could play in the display of Orthodox ideology. Embellishment through ornament was of little use, carrying, as it did, no overt Christological message.

2. The origin and initial purpose of external display.

Nothing can be proved out of the small sample of buildings we have examined, the dating of which covers a period of some two hundred years or more. None of the structures can be dated with confidence earlier than the second quarter of the ninth

century. Indeed, as was clear from the discussion of the Amastris churches, a safer period for the group would be from the third quarter of the ninth century to the first quarter of the eleventh.

When all the structures are viewed together, however, there is an element of coherency in the group in that it seems to reveal a developmental process indicated by growing complexities of forms over time. The earliest of the forms, on the churches of Amastris, is a simple single reticulate pattern applied evenly over upper registers with no prominence given to any particular part of the building. The church of St John the Baptist in Mesembria comprises simple limited patterns but there is now a further development, surface modelling. Furthermore a deliberate choice has been made to prioritise, with the modelling and the patterns, certain areas of the structure having a direct bearing on the function of the church. St Stephen, Mesembria and the Five Apsed Church at Cherson, each in their individual ways, are far more highly developed in surface expression, the former containing a wide variety of idiosyncratic forms and the other displaying an emphatic display of masses with clear hierarchy expressed in plan and elevation.

We see that in our period, one in which concern for external effect is first detected, it is already manifesting itself across the Byzantine world from Asia Minor to Greece and Macedonia and into Bulgaria and in a great variety of forms.[978] In this context one should again recall the church of Holy Cross at Aght'amar where ornament was

[978] The examples of the North Church of Constantine Lips (907) and the Myrelaion (920) reveal the great variety of surface embellishment, on a single basic form (the 4-column, cross-in-square), in a single location, the capital, by the first quarter of the tenth century.

extensively applied to external surfaces in a manner hitherto unknown in Armenia.[979] In this respect the Armenian builders were partaking in similar changes in Byzantine practice using locally derived forms.

The impetus must have become established some years earlier than the surviving examples and then spread, like ripples on a pond. There could only be one realistic candidate of sufficient stature and influence to affect the whole empire and lands beyond, the capital. Equally, however, the original impetus must have been a multifaceted one for a variety to arise in such a short period (assuming the impetus arose in the ninth century). Furthermore there is no noticeable dominating form. That suggests an absence of any prescriptive force either from the church or the state.[980]

We have seen, at the time the subject churches were being built, each of our three cities was, in various ways, the focus of imperial attention. The period over which the structures were erected was one where there had been great centralisation of power to Constantinople, both secular and spiritual, and it would be hardly surprising to find Constantinopolitan influences apparent in the art and architecture of the provinces. That said the variety of building forms and the mix of elements of display on them suggest there was not a cultural metropolitan hegemony and that great diversity occurred within a relatively few decades of external display manifesting itself in Byzantine architecture.

[979] Der Nersessian (1965), 11. Internal embellishment reveals knowledge of then current Byzantine/ Orthodox iconography. Ibid, 44, 49.
[980] That the relative sophistication, refinement and intricacies of external display on early tenth century structures points to more basic or experimental progenitors is a point made by other scholars; e.g. Ćurčić (2010), 274 (on the North Church of Constantine Lips), and Striker (1981), 34-5 (on the Myrelaion. The point has been made above in the discussion of the dating of St. John, Mesembria; pp. 162f.

The earliest examples we examined, the *spolia* phase and the *opus reticulatum* at Amastris we saw related to imperial attention both to defences and to status. I dated the *spolia* stage at Amastris to the start of the ninth century but it must be acknowledged that there are valid arguments for relating that practice to earlier periods on the basis of the use externally of spolia in (e.g.) the walls of Nikaia and Ankara.[981] It was display marshalled to aid projection of imperial authority specifically against the Arab foe. The cruciform medallion in FC and the cross emblem in the walls were devoted to similar aims, re-enforcing earthy power with heavenly strength. The north wall of FC was not a liminal space for the church; the edifice was part of the total defensive regime. The *opus reticulatum* was not projecting Christian ideology but an explicit message of the city's association with imperial (Roman) authority. This use of external display to reveal authority is supported by an analogous use on the Panaghia at Skripou (873-4) where the facades displayed, via dedicatory plaques and inscriptions, the authority of a high imperial official. That such use was its original purpose is given added support by the written sources and specifically the entry in Theophanes Continuatus of the buildings of Theophilos at Bryas. That the inspiration for that work was the buildings of the caliphate at Baghdad is not without significance.[982] The actions of Theophilos in

[981] The insertion of sections of columns endwise into the seventh-century walls at Ankara creating a partial horizontal band of circular motifs is an example of non-decorative *spolia* having a decorative effect. A fine illustration of these can be found in Wickham (2010), plate 20. It is likely that, as at Ankara, such external display through the use of non-decorative spoil would have arisen serendipitously. The columns were almost certainly inserted primarily as lateral strengtheners for the walls as can clearly be seen in the walls near the Kalenderhane Cami, Constantinople (fig. 85). Decorative classical spoil was sometimes chosen for deliberate display purposes as is revealed in the walls and churches in Amastris but the use of expressive *spolia* was reserved primarily for internal embellishment. Indeed the demand for important elements such as columns and capitals was strong enough to justify long distance shipments. Ousterhout (1999), 142-5.

[982] It is beyond the scope of this study to examine what drove Theophilos to introduce his "Arab" forms to the Bryas palace beyond to make the following brief observations. Under al-Mansur (754-775) the 'Abbasid caliphate was asserting itself as a world empire and Islam as a universalist religion. As Gutas has shown those twin assertions made Islam a proselytising faith. Gutas (1998), 62-3. Consequently there was a growth of polemic literature with Islamic and Christian Orthodox apologists confronting each other. Orthodoxy had to defend itself on complex issues such as the relationship between Christ's

Figure 85.

Constantinople. Kalenderhani Camii from south. Spoil use.

Figure 86.

Constantinople. Church of Constantine Lips, North Church from the east.

adopting "Arabic models" should not be viewed as a simple copying process. The exchange of cultural artefacts, often exotic gifts, took place and not only between Byzantium and the caliphate in the eighth and ninth centuries with the material then being retextualised for the receiver's purposes. In that process the import acquired new meaning and the receiver demonstrated control and superiority over the exporter.[983] There is no reason why architecture should not have been susceptible to the same process. Indeed, having regard to the nature of monumental architecture as "public document", there is every reason to think that it would have been.

Whilst we see evidence of the use of external display to reveal secular power and authority (supplemented by heavenly strength available to God's vice-gerent on earth) we do not detect any interest or involvement of the ecclesiastical powers. Whilst the symmetry of placement of ancillary spaces and the fully formed tripartite apse (as developed by the time of the erection of the Koimesis at Nikaia) were aspects that

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human and divine nature during the Passion and resurrection, Corrigan (1992), 89, the validity of the Eucharist, Ibid, 90, and against charges of idolatry in relation to the cross, Ibid, 91-2. Under al-Ma'mun (813-33) the Translation Movement was used as a weapon in an ideological war focussed actively against Christianity, the one religion that rivalled Islam's claim to universality. Christianity was denigrated as irrational (three gods in one) and this was itself argued to be evidence of the extent that Byzantium had rejected the ancient learning that Islam now embraced. Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-Ahbar*, trans. Rosenthal, 44-5 and reproduced in Gutas (1989), 85-6. The Life of Cyril reveals the Muslims taunting Cyril with their great secular and scientific learning, belittling the Christian belief in the Trinity and boasting the success of Islam in converting "a multitude of men"; VC, ch. 3. It was argued that Byzantium was not the true inheritor of ancient wisdom and that none of that learning was the product of Christianity; Al-Jahiz, "Kitab al-Radd 'ala al-nasara", in *Rasa'il al-Jahiz*, trans. Pellat and reproduced in Gutas (1989), 86-7. It was even argued the Byzantines were not ethnically Greek; Gutas (1989), 88. Nor was it just the Islamic faith that the caliphate claimed was superior. The Byzantine political system was unfavourably compared to that which al-Ma'mun had developed. In Byzantium there was not seen to be any certainty in succession ;El Cheikh (2004), 88, and had weaknesses, since the head of state could be a woman. As El Cheikh has pointed out, whilst Muslim writers expressed no surprise that Byzantium could have a female emperor, there is no feminine form for caliph or other ruler exercising both a secular and a spiritual role. Furthermore a *hadith* (a saying or tradition of Mohammed) advised against trusting affairs to a woman lest prosperity be lost and the attitude thus expressed would reflect the then Muslim view of a female emperor. El Cheikh (2004), 90-1. Furthermore the emperor was seen to defer to the patriarch; Ibid, 89. Al-Ma'mun had adopted a name (God's Caliph) that underlined his assertion to be both secular head of the Muslim state and the ultimate arbiter in matters of faith.

[983] Brubaker has demonstrated this process in relation to decorative motifs for manuscripts. When Byzantium imported cultural ideas, it was selective in the choice and in the manner of display so that they blended into an existing system. Brubaker (2004), 187-8. The cultural import also has an effect on the receiving culture as it did with regard to Byzantine book ornament. Ibid, 183.

readily announced the presence of an Orthodox church,[984] that external appearance almost certainly arose, not through any concern for external appearance, but indirectly through a concern for internal arrangements. So much is strongly suggested by the structures on Lake Apolyont and others where externally quite intricate internal arrangements were suppressed.[985] Such evidence we have (including the absence of any polemic relating to the presentation of the exterior) suggests that, until the late ninth century at least, the church (secular or monastic) was simply unconcerned with the external appearance of church buildings.

3. The purposes of external display in our period.

The purposes for which external architectural display were marshalled in our period were revealed in the examinations of the structures in the three cities. They may be briefly summarised.

In Amastris and Mesembria the elements of display can all be related to the revelation of authority. Those at Amastris have already been summarised above.[986] They related to the raising of the status of the city consequent upon its enhanced role as a major

[984] See image in Krautheimer (1986), 290, fig. 254. That recognition arises, in part, from the visual association between a prominent triple apsed sanctuary and dominant dome, on a squat plan
[985] The hiding of the bema arrangement occurs, seemingly, well into the ninth century as witness the plan of the church of St Constantine on Lake Apolyont. A complex interior layout with four chambers, the two eastern ones niched, symmetrically placed about a central domed core was encased within a simple rectangular frame with only a single shallow apse at the east. Mango (1979), 329-333. To add to its complexity the structure had apsed zones to the west and was adorned with a western semi-dome. Mango states that it is Middle Byzantine "beyond doubt" and not unreasonable to give it a ninth or tenth century dating; ibid, 333. The internal layout has similarities with the monastery church at Pelekete in Bithynia (775-825). The latter has niched zones similarly arranged symmetrically about the central apse. The exterior is represented by a single shallow apse. Mango firmly believes, however, that there was originally a triple apsed arrangement even though the remains now visible show a straight wall either side of the apse. Mango and Ševčenko (1973), 248.
[986] See above pp. 115-6 .

Black Sea port and the creation of the new theme of Paphlagonia with Amastris as its second city.

Mesembria was, for the bulk of our period, a crucial Black Sea border city within the borders of Bulgaria. It was, in that period, a meeting place for top-level diplomacy, both for church and state (as evidenced by the correspondence of Nikolas I Mystikos)[987] at a time of great tension between Byzantium and Symeon's Bulgaria, not only as a result of territorial contests but also through the pretension of Symeon to the Byzantine throne.[988] We have seen that St. John can be ascribed to the period of Symeon's rule. Its display, both as to its expressive form and through its embellishment, was a vehicle for the broadcasting of Symeon's secular authority and his Orthodox credentials in a location where such messages would not be lost on either the Byzantine state or the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate.

St. Stephen's eccentricities can, we saw, be linked to expressions of celebration of imperial success in re-uniting of imperial territory in a locality directly involved in changes of allegiances resulting from that process. The architectural embellishments reveal a feeling towards a relevant form of expression at a time, for Mesembria, of considerable political upheaval. That such expressive architecture arose in Mesembria at this time shows how the city continued to be one of importance to the empire notwithstanding it was no longer on a border dividing contesting polities. Its importance no doubt lay in its value as a trading centre on the Black Sea and its strategic value for monitoring traffic in the now enhanced "Sea of the Rum".

[987] For example NCP, *Letters*, 14 (Nikolas proposes to travel to Mesembria to effect both peace between the nations and a unity of the church.
[988] NCP, *Letters*,15, 18, 21, 27.

In neither Amastris nor Mesembria could the external display be said to be broadcasting Christological messages with the exception of the isolated crosses. In Cherson the display through structure identified there is of an entirely different character. Here, and in other sites on the north Black Sea coastal zones, we have seen the church building as a whole becoming symbolic of the basic elements of Christian ideology, a message moreover, on what evidence we have, seemingly undiluted by the presence of ornament of no Christological value. Expressive church architecture had been, as we have seen,[989] developed in Byzantium near the Bulgar lands and associated with those active in the conversion process. It is noticeable that H. Andreas, like the similarly expressive Cherson churches, did not carry surface embellishment or articulation, displaying through structure alone.

That church structure achieved the level of expressiveness we have seen in the north Black Sea region and not in the heartlands of the empire points strongly to its utilisation in the all-important conversion process of peoples of crucial concern to the interests of Byzantium. We see in this region the church, both monastic and secular, becoming concerned with the external appearance of the building representing the faith to an extent not detectable before the mid-tenth century.

4. Lines of influence

The written sources reveal the Constantinopolitan patriarchate taking a leading role in marshalling all available local resources to aid the task of conversion of whole populations and we can also detect, in structures such as the North Church of

[989] See above p. 252 and n.908.

Constantine Lips, the emergence of elements such as symmetric placing of subsidiary spaces, an emphasised eastern façade embellished with multiple apses all in combination with a steep elevation aided by a dome on a high drum, that form the basic features of structural display. What is common, therefore, to both major forms of display we have identified, is the capital. All evidence points to Constantinople at the highest levels of both the secular and sacred as the fount of the phenomenon. The routes of dissemination are less clear.

We have seen that within the capital there was no settled pattern with regard to the application of external display. This is equally evident in what was happening in the provinces and beyond (such as Armenia). With regard to surface embellishment it is impossible to detect routes of dissemination of patterns. It did not always appear to have been one of direct transmission from the capital nor is there any reason to suppose it should have been. On the Balkan peninsula a separate building tradition arose, inspired initially by Constantinopolitan types, but then generating distinct models of its own (the Round Church) and external display (pseudo-structure). St John the Baptist, Mesembria seems to have been a product of that distinct building tradition.

Distance from the centre (Constantinople) did play a part. In this instance "distance" was not so much physical but cultural and political. This was certainly the case with southern Greece, an area that, as Mango has observed, did not receive the attention of the Orthodox Church in respect of building until the tenth and eleventh centuries.[990] Here, and in the immediately adjoining region of Bulgaria, there quickly developed

[990] Mango (1985), 115-6.

quite distinct means of external expression departing from metropolitan practice in both manner and execution. As the examples of St John of Mesembria on the one hand and the contemporary structures in Kastoria on the other reveal, the separation affected both imperial territory and the Bulgar state. Otherwise geographic distance mattered little and indeed cities geographically close to the capital (Nikaia and Ankara as examples) seem to have been less affected by the impetus to give consideration to the exterior than other areas some distance away such as Dereağzi.

St John of Mesembria was built in a form then current in Preslav, including the application of pseudo-structural pilasters. The exterior expression through surface moulding and restriction of brick embellishment to certain areas appears to be a reflection of Constantinopolitan developments but mediated through Bulgar practices. It is also lacking the exuberance in surface embellishment being expressed in contemporary structures in Kastoria. It seems a reasonable proposition that the perceived differences between the eastern and western regions of the Bulgar state can, in part at least, be related to relative proximity to seats of power. Not only was the capital of the Bulgar Khan in the eastern part but there was also a close following, by the Bulgar rulers, of patterns of architecture in the Orthodox capital for the buildings of Pliska and Preslav. That reflected not only cultural exchange generated by physical proximity to Constantinople but also an intention to demonstate cultural parity with the capital.

The variety of expression revealed in St Stephen shortly after the reconquest of Mesembria by the empire shows the confidence in external display exhibited by local builders directly inspired by forms, in part at least, imported from the capital since

none of the elements (other than the pilasters and possibly the glazed pots) were to be found in, then current, Bulgar building. St Stephen also reveals that, even after at least a century and a half of development, forms of external display had not become settled or rigid. The external surface was a zone that was receptive to the introduction of fresh motifs, introduced, moreover, from traditions outside the Byzantine world.

The differences evident in display between the structures examined in the three cities must, in part, be explained both by the position of each in chronological development but also as a function of the nature of the attention paid to each city by the capital. The examples of Amastris and Cherson show that these cities retained tenacious local building traditions sustained by powerful local elites, both civil and ecclesiastical. The establishment of a theme administration did not interfere with those traditions. There was no imposition of forms, either in structure or external embellishment. The reticulate patterns on the Amastris churches seem to have reflected more the desire of the city itself to assume some modes of expression with a clear local resonance rather than the capital imposing those modes on it. The absence (save for a plaque and some spoil) of external display in St Ann, Trebizond seems to confirm that it was simply a matter of local choice whether attention was to be given to the exterior, even when, as there, the building was erected under direct imperial sponsorship.[991]

Certainly localism or regionalism has been a recurrent theme in this study: in Amastris reflected in association with the remains of its local Roman monument: in Mesembria "local" forms of articulation ("pseudo-structure") developed in east Bulgaria: in Cherson the squat basilica with fully rounded apse itself later to manifest

[991] Eyice asserted that remains he discovered of internal decoration in the Amastris churches related to Constantinople but these were not visible upon the author's inspection. Eyice (1954), 103, n. 4.

itself in the locally (Black Sea zone) developed structural display. The regional dialect we also saw exhibited in the distinctive forms at Kastoria, appeared at the end of the ninth century and then tenaciously persisted into the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.[992] An identical tenacity of local identification in forms of embellishment we saw exhibited at Mesembria where decorative motifs first appearing in St. John and St. Stephen in rudimentary forms are repeated in highly developed patterns in its later churches of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[993]The choice throughout of the forms of elaboration locally applied and the manner of their application were unrelated to the quite separate choice of underlying church form and design.[994]

As to the extent the Black Sea facilitated exchange and dissemination it cannot be said it appeared to have played any part in our period with regard to ornament and articulation of surfaces. It is possible to detect communication across the Black Sea between Amastris and Cherson involving the transmission of architectural forms. It would not be a surprise to find evidence of exchange or sharing of cultural material in the light of sources revealing close connections in trade and between their respective church leaders. Of particular interest is the suggestion - and it cannot be put higher than that on the evidence we have discussed - that the two cities shared a desire to retain forms not then found in Constantinople.[995]

With regard to display through structure, however, a clear channel of communication can be seen between the capital and Cherson, Alania and Kievan Rus'. Both written

[992] Ćurčić (2010), 381-3.
[993] Ibid, 619-24. See above pp. 140, 144 and figs 52 to 54.
[994] That this was not by any means an uncommon phenomenon has been noted by Buchwald (1979) in his examination of Lascarid architecture and the decorative ornament the churches displayed, all erected in a relatively small region within a short period of time (1220-1265). Ibid, 292-6. See above, p. 22.
[995] See above pp. 246-7.

sources and the evidence we have seen of the development of the forms of architecture reveal the Black Sea as the common connecting thread binding them together.

A final word.

I have sought to show that two clear forms of exterior display had manifested themselves during our period. One comprised the embellishment of exterior surfaces through ornamental patterns, spoil insertion and inscriptions as well by the modelling of surfaces through pilasters and the recession of planes. The other was through the arrangement of structural masses and the interrelationship between them, creating a forcible expression of presence and directionality. Both forms arguably derived from a common source, the need for the effective display of imperial authority. From the tenth century, however, the development was separately generated by different impulses, one continuing to be an expression of secular authority, the other of sacred ideology.

I have also sought to show that within the category of ornament a typological division is detectable between that form which carries a message (legible or overtly symbolic) and that which simply asserts the presence of the building and thus, indirectly, the power or status of the patron. We have seen also how external decorative display has the potential to reveal the presence and influence of tenacious local traditions and possibly the continuing influence, in the teeth of a growing centralisation of imperial authority, of local elites able to preserve regional modes of construction. The regional differences detectable were not merely the product of local workshop practices. These

are aspects of Byzantine architecture that have not, as yet, been explored and all suggest that a fresh paradigm is available for its study.

Hitherto the study of Byzantine architecture has tended to focus on basic forms of structures, predominantly (by necessity) of churches, and internal embellishment (predominantly, again of necessity, of icons and patterns of worship). It has been primarily through a consideration of major structural forms that theories of developmental lines and patterns of influence have been posited, often mixed with consideration of the development of the liturgy. Ousterhout has rightly reminded us however that, for Byzantine architecture, it is in the detail on the basic forms – the zones appended to basic cores and the embellishment of facades – that the huge variety presents itself and that workshop practices were instrumental in maintaining regional dialects and, in some instances (e.g. recessed brick) the export of forms.[996] I would venture to add that this study reveals the potential, through a closer examination of external architectural display, for the surviving Byzantine structures to be a source of information previously untapped on issues of: (Byzantine) regionality, the presence and influence of local elites and the extent they, as well as workshop practice, assisted the continuance of local dialects in architecture: the transmission of cultural expression and the diversity of the routes of dissemination: the exercise and display of imperial and ecclesiastical authority and its role in the enlargement of the Orthodox world beyond the political boundaries of the Byzantine empire, in short to assist in explaining the rich variety to be found in Byzantine architectural expression. The external display in churches, the predominating group of surviving monuments, has, in this respect, the potential to reveal information about Byzantine state and

[996] Ousterhout (1999), 37-8).

society beyond that limited to their function and separate from that ascertainable from internal embellishment.

Whilst the potential for extracting such information has been noted, indeed revealed in various studies, it has been and remains a piecemeal process. A systematic study of external architectural display in Byzantine architecture is overdue together with the re-appraisal of the stock of surviving structures that would arise from that study.

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